





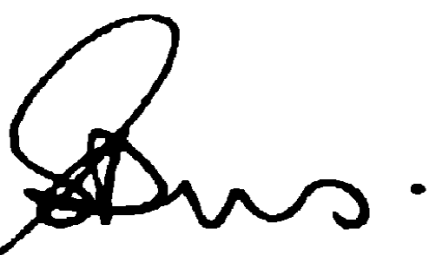








THE  
Gutten of Guinea  
T. Smith  
1851

  
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## DEDICATION

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TO THOMAS BARKER ESQ NORTH SHIELDS

DEAR SIR

In dedicating the following work to you, I have been so fully influenced by the position you hold as one of the landed proprietors in the North of England, and the lively interest you have taken in your countrymen of that description, but comparatively unknown people, of whom the pages treat.

Your benevolence has prompted you to acts of charity divine and of men doing so, so that you have received the well merited appellation of the Heathens Friend, and therefore a further insight into their character, habits, customs, and religion, by one who has commanded in the ceremonies and traced out the recesses—the almost hidden recesses—of African character will not I presume be unacceptable to you, whose sympathies have long been enlisted on their behalf.

To your candour therefore I submit these pages and with high admiration of your general character and many private and social virtues, I subscribe myself, with every sentiment of esteem,

Your affectionate Nephew,

J. Smith

*Corwood, May 20th, 1851*

## Preface..

IN laying before the public the employment of a few leisure hours, the author neither claims merit to himself for any literary ability nor for possessing any extraordinary degree of observation: there are gentlemen connected with commerce in the Gulph of Gunnea, particularly in the oil rivers, he has no doubt, better qualified to delineate the character and describe the customs and manners of its inhabitants than he is. Since, however, none of these gentlemen have undertaken the task, and as the manuscript has grown up to the size of a small volume, what was intended only for the amusement of a small family circle, is introduced to the notice of the public. Much information on the subjects treated cannot be expected from the officers of her Majesty's vessels stationed on that coast; their visits, though frequent, are too short for them to see much of the African character, who, on occasion of receiving them always puts on his "sunday face"

which he continues to wear as long as they remain in intercourse with him.

Having made several voyages to this country in the double capacity of surgeon and trading-captain, (as the Africans style the agent of European merchants,) to one of the first mercantile houses in England, and having been repeatedly brought in contact with a great number of the inhabitants, on several occasions for many consecutive months, the author, in spite of great obstacles, has acquired some information, and also witnessed some extraordinary scenes which will be laid before the reader in the following pages. He will have to deal chiefly with the inhabitants of one nation, but one, which will really include a description of many others, inasmuch as those different barbarous countries on the West Coast very nearly resemble each other in their customs, morals, and manners.

The author regrets the occasion of some coarse expressions and allusions to be found in this work, but, as the people he gives an account of are in so debased a state as to render the conveying anything like a correct notion of them otherwise, impossible, he deems any farther apology unnecessary.



## Introduction.

THE extensive countries on the Western Coast of Africa extending between the mouths of the rivers Gambia in about thirteen and a half degrees north latitude, and sixteen and a half degrees west longitude, and Angola in about ten degrees south latitude, and twelve degrees east longitude, called GUINEA, were not known to Europeans till towards the latter end of the fifteenth century.

Nunno Tristan in 1447 had advanced as far as the river Grande in  $11^{\circ} 35'$  north; but it was not till 1484 that Diego Cam took the coast along as far as Angola, and from thence to Cape Cross or de Padrona in  $21^{\circ} 50'$  south. To the first of these voyagers, then, are we indebted for acquainting us with the northern extremity of the Gulph of Guinea, and to the last for making

known to us the coast at its southern limit. Several captains and conductors of expeditions were engaged in discovering the coast between these two points

Guinea Proper or Upper Guinea, is now, however, restricted between the latitudes of  $10^{\circ} 19'$  north and  $0^{\circ} 36'$  south, Capa Verga being the northern and Cape Lopez the southern boundary, extending upwards of two thousand miles along a line of coast, embracing nearly twenty-two degrees of longitude from west, eastward, and comprising the districts of Sierra Leone, Grain Coast, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, Slave Coast or Benin, and Biafra, the last-mentioned bight having within it another little bight called Pannava.

Guinea is supposed to derive its name from Ginnee, Jenni or Jennah, formerly a large commercial emporium on the Niger. It could hardly be derived from Jénna on the Slave Coast, a place of some note, ruled by a governor tributary to the King of Yarraba, as it is not likely that the Moors should have wandered so far southward beyond the great desert, Zahara. The Portuguese who made known the entire west, south, and south-east coasts of Africa to the modern world, gave the name of Guinea to these extensive countries in the Gulph of the same name, and their

Monarch, John the Second, in 1481—2, assumed the style and title of Senhor de Guine or Lord of Guinea, claiming a right to prohibit other Europeans from trading there, or even landing on any part of the coast, and these preposterous pretensions were sanctioned by the Pope. It will perhaps not be uninteresting to the reader to trace some discoveries on this great continent.

• It may be premised that Cape Sarte in  $35^{\circ} 47'$  north, and  $5^{\circ} 55'$  west, being the north-west extremity, to Cape Nam or Non or Nun—Noun, in latitude  $28^{\circ} 45'$ , was the only part known to European navigators at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and from this point commenced the discovery of the other unknown parts of Africa, which have been given to the world.

Stimulated by a desire to be acquainted with the coast beyond the boundary to which navigators had advanced, and by the flattering accounts he had received from the Moors of the country of Guinea, Prince Henry, a son of John the First, King of Portugal, by Philippa, daughter to John of Gaunt and sister to Henry the Fourth of England, in 1415 took up his abode at St. Vincent, the part of his country nearest to Africa, and was the original promoter and director of the expeditions that led to the splendid discove-

ries to the making of which, he devoted his life, and by which his name is immortalized. The two small vessels despatched by the prince, reached Cape Bajador in latitude  $26^{\circ} 20'$ , but a heavy sea foaming and lashing that cape, alarmed the mariners so much, that they were afraid of doubling it, so they returned home. It is said that three years before this, a ship despatched by King John had doubled Wad-noun, there is not, however, sufficient evidence for believing this statement. It does not appear that Cape Bajador was doubled till 1432, when Gilhanez, from whom it received its name, had the courage to make the attempt, which was successful. Zarco and Tristan Vaz re-discovered the beautiful and salubrious island of one mountain, Madeira, in 1419, for it had been previously visited by an Englishman, of the name of Macham or Machin, and also by the Spaniards. This island was at first called Saint Laurence, but afterwards *Madeira*, from the Spanish word signifying wood, extensive forests having been found in it, which, on being fired, are said to have burned for seven years.

In 1440, Gonzalez reached as far as Cape Blanco, in latitude  $20^{\circ} 47'$ , and in 1443 Nunno Tristan sailed to the southward of it. The last-

mentioned navigator discovered two of the isles of Arguim or Arguin, forming part of a group of small islands situated to the south of Cape Blanco. Dinis Fernandez reached Cape Verde, the westernmost point of Africa, in latitude  $14^{\circ} 45'$  north, and longitude  $17^{\circ} 32'$  west, in 1446, and during the following year, Lancelot or Lancelaroto discovered a great river between Cape Blanco and Cape Verde, called by the natives Ovdec, to which he gave the name of Sanagá or Canaga, now called by the English Senegal. Lancelot this voyage (1447) touched at the Canaries, formerly called Fortunate Islands. This group of thirteen islands, situated between the parallels of  $29^{\circ} 25'$  and  $27^{\circ} 41'$  north, and the meridians of  $13^{\circ} 17'$  and  $18^{\circ} 9'$  west, had, however, been taken possession of by the Spaniards a hundred years before, and was known to the ancients, being mentioned by Ptolemy, who reckons all his longitudes from them, or from some one point in them. Nunno Tristan reached the Rio Grande the same year, but in sailing up that river was killed by the blood-thirsty natives.

Antonio di Noli, a Genoese, one of Prince Henry's dependents, discovered the Cape de Verde Islands sometime between 1449 and 1462. This

group of ten islands lays three hundred miles west of Cape Verde, between the parallels of  $17^{\circ} 12'$  and  $14^{\circ} 48'$  north; and the meridians of  $22^{\circ} 46'$  and  $25^{\circ} 25'$  west. Prince Henry the great promoter of these discoveries, as before stated, died in 1438. The work of discovery however went on, if possible, with more enthusiasm than ever, having become quite a national passion, and the Portuguese government prosecuting it, by the year 1467 added Sierra Leon to their charts, and two years afterwards the Grain Coast. The same year that the Grain Coast was discovered the Island of Fernando Po in the Bight of Biafra was discovered by the person whose name it bears. About this period Fernando Gomez rented from the Portuguese government, for 500 ducats, a monopoly of the trade of Guinea under bond to explore 1500 miles more of the coast. Soon after the discovery of Fernando Po, at first called Hermosa (the fair,) the Islands of Princes', Thomas', and Anno Bon,—the other islands of the Gulph of Guinea—were fallen in with. In 1471 Saint Catharine in latitude  $2^{\circ} 30'$  south, was reached by John de Santarem and Pedro de Escalona. In 1481 Alphonso died and was succeeded by his son John the Second when he assumed the title of Lord of Guinea. After this, discoveries on the

African coast were resumed with renewed vigour.

Diego Cam in 1484 sailed from Elmina on the Gold Coast,—the first European settlement on the Coast of Guinea, latitude  $5^{\circ} 5'$  where the castle and fort of Saint George had been built three years previously,—to the Congo or Zaira, the mouth of which lies in about  $6^{\circ} 0'$  south latitude. After ascending the Congo for some distance—the black stream of which is visible in the sea for many miles before it commingles with the ocean and becomes invisible—Diego Cam returned, and reaching to the southward made Cape Cross where he landed and set up a great cross built of stones—hence the name—and inscribed on it the king's name. Three ships under the command of the scientific and celebrated Bartholomew Diaz passed the farthest point reached by Diego Cam and pursuing his course to the south, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, named by him Cabo Tormentoso—the Cape of Tempests—and following the course of the land, lying in a north-easterly direction, made a small island in Algoa Bay, midway between the promontory of the Cape of Good Hope and Port Natal, which he called Santa Cruz or the Holy Cross. De Gama afterwards extended his researches to the Arabian Gulph. The Arabians long previous to

De Gama's time had been acquainted with the south-east coast, where they had established themselves and at the island of Madagascar.

- But if the great historian of the ancients, Herodotus, is to be believed, the Phœnecians six hundred years before the christian era, starting from the red sea, sailed round the whole of Africa into the Mediterranean or North Sea, passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, known as the Pillars of Hercules<sup>va</sup>, and reached Egypt. The statement of Herodotus has been doubted, and the learned divided in their opinions; it is not therefore for me to express one on the subject. The fact, however, of his having stated that Africa is surrounded by water, except at the narrow neck of land called the Isthmus of Suez, and that the voyagers had the sun to the north of them, (which he appears to doubt,) are strong presumptions of the voyage having been performed. The Carthagenians also lay claim to having navigated the Western Coast to some extent, if not to having sailed round Africa. Passing through the straits of Gibraltar, Hanno, one of the rulers of Carthage with thirty thousand settlers, which he landed on various parts of the Coast of Barbary, is supposed by some to have reached only as far as Sierra Leon. It is pretty certain, at any rate, that



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## CHAPTER I

### THE BIGHTS OF BENIN AND BIAFRA

The Bights of Benin and Biafra.—The oil rivers—Description of the coast.—The New Calabar river.—The Slave Trade in the gulf of Guinea.—Women of Africa.—Witchcraft.—Africa little known.—Dangers to Europeans from Miasma.—Secrecy of the Inhabitants.—Instances of Secrecy.—Influence of Priests.—Penalty by Priests.—Brick floor not allowed

INTO the Bights of Benin and Biafra—Biafra being the innermost part of the Gulph of Guinea—flow some three and twenty rivers, several of which are so many outlets of the Niger. The Nun, the principal branch, empties itself into the Bight of Benin near the promontory at its eastern extremity, where commences the Bight of Biafra. Few of these rivers are navigable for vessels of any considerable size; those of them that are, as the Benue, the Nun, the New Calabar, the Bonny, the Old Calabar, and the Cameroons, have for some

years been known as the Oil rivers of Africa, on account of their supplying European markets, particularly the English market, with palm oil, an article of considerable importance in a commercial point of view. The rivers during the heavy, tornado and rainy seasons increase vastly in bulk, and the tide ebbing with increased velocity carries with it shrubs and trees torn up by the roots, dead animals and filth of every description. Beside the rivers, at these seasons the vistas pour out from the numerous lagoons immense volumes of water mixed with a dark brown slimy, fetid scum, which may be observed several miles in the offing.

The length of shore of the two bights is about a thousand miles, presenting a low monotonous appearance with scarcely an eminence of ten feet from Cape Saint Paul's to the Bight of Pannavia. A great part of the coast is covered with trees and jungle growing up from the mark to where the water flows at spring tides. Where it is not fringed with a sandy beach, the eternal mangrove, springing from its muddy bed some feet below high water mark, extends along the coast and the margins of the rivers, creeks, and vistas, leaving exposed the upper part of the roots, when the tide ebbs. To these roots oysters are often at-

tached, which are brought to market in rows or clusters of half a score or so on each, firmly adhering to them. In coming from the westward or windward, or in making Fernando Po on your returning home, it is quite a relief for the eye to fall upon the mountains of that island and the Camaróons, the snow capped mountain of Rio de Janeiro of the latter place being thirteen thousand feet above the level of the sea.

It was formerly the custom for vessels bound to the New Calabar and Bonny rivers to make the Nun, and count down the six rivers lying between it and the estuary of these two rivers, but as navigation has of late years been conducted on more scientific principles and better educated men employed in the oil trade, and as the coast has been more accurately surveyed, this has been found unnecessary. Captains of vessels now endeavour to make the sixth river, or Sombreiro, not far from the western extremity of the estuary. The distance between the mouth of the Niger or Nun and the eastern extremity of this estuary is between sixty and seventy miles; the estuary itself is between seven and eight miles wide. The mouth of the Bonny, the easternmost of these two rivers, is surrounded with shoals, and although there are two dangerous bars to pass, the pas-

sage in and out is considered comparatively safe for Africa. I suppose there are an immense number of anchors on the bars and in the neighbourhood, in consequence of a heavy sea that arises after a change of wind, or heavy squall, which causes ships to be driven from their anchors, or from the masters of vessels slipping them in order to make sail on the ship.

No part of the coast of Africa has supplied America and the West Indies with so many slaves as the Gulph of Guinea, and no part of the gulph has done more business in this nefarious and brutalizing traffic, than the bights, and of all the slave stations that formerly existed in these bights, the Bonny at one time, was perhaps the greatest mart. It is now the greatest mart for palm oil. I believe at this moment there is not a single station in the Bight of Biafra where business in human beings is transacted with white men. There are however seventeen or eighteen slave stations in the Bight of Benin, but so closely are they watched by the English and French cruisers, that perhaps not more than one slave ship in four or five escapes them. But one successful voyage in four or five pays the merchant and agent well. A few years ago, I met in the river just alluded to, the Spanish agent

of a Brazilian slave house, who informed me he had had twelve vessels consigned to him within little more than a year,—that eight of them had been taken, and that two had entirely escaped; and the other two were then lying at no great distance, one at least of which he hoped would succeed in escaping, in which event he should make plenty of money for himself, and pour heaps of money in to the coffers of his employers. This gentleman travelled about from river to river, and station to station, in a canoe paddled by six or seven natives. He carried with him provisions, a small cooking apparatus and all the little luxuries the nature of his situation would permit; and falling into the habits, in a great measure, of the different people he visited, he carried out the maxim of being a Roman at Rome. This vigilance however on the part of the English and French governments is not doing away with the evil, but simply causing the trade to be transferred from one part of the coast to another, since it is carried on as briskly as ever. All the men of war in the British Navy would fail of accomplishing that most desirable object—the entire suppression of the trade. To blockade some thousands of miles of coast, is more than the greatest maritime power in the world can accomplish, even with the assistance of

France. Although a great deal of money has been expended and the greatest skill, perseverance, and scientific appliances have been called into requisition if possible to consummate an object so devoutly wished by the British nation, hitherto it has failed, and must continue to fail unless diverted into another channel, as the same means used by the men of war to capture the slavers will be adopted by the captains of slavers to defeat detection and effect escape.

The part of Africa of which we speak is called Central Nigritia or Soudan; and the inhabitants for several degrees both north and south of the equinoxial line are denominated Negroes or Ethiopians. War and the slave trade have caused a number of tribes to be brought to the coast, where they have become so amalgamated with the Soudan tribe that any peculiarity of physical appearance they might have once possessed is now lost.

As to their morals, all the West African tribes are much the same, with only some shades of difference of lighter or darker tint. The women in this as in all other countries, savage or civilized, are less brutal and rapacious than the men; and on occasions that call out the best feelings of humanity sometimes display a degree of kindness you hardly expect to meet with. They

have appeared really to pity one when labouring under a severe paroxysm of intermittent fever and offer any little thing they think will add to your comfort or relief. I cannot say however the hope of receiving a little present may not have something to do with it. When one of their sex is accused of witchcraft no mercy is shown. While walking in the town of Bonny one day near to the house of a chief called Dappo, I observed a woman in the hands of a number of harridans attempting to escape and shrieking dreadfully. She was quickly lashed in a very painful position to a large gun that lay near the door, when one of them forced a piece of folded cloth between her teeth and tied it at the back of her head with such force as to cause the blood to start from her nose and eyes. Some Englishmen happening to pass at the time, we interfered and for some trifling consideration persuaded them to release her which they did with no very good grace. We found on enquiry that this unhappy woman was suspected of causing the death of a man found in her house, by witchcraft, for having paid her a bad manilla.

The expression of the countenance of the people from the interior is milder, and they are less rapacious and much better disposed generally than the inhabitants of the coast. It is a fact, but one



very humiliating to acknowledge, that those blacks are the most depraved who have cultivated acquaintance with white men—they having adopted all their vices but none of their virtues.

The customs and manners of the African, particularly in the central parts and on the western coast of that great continent, are perhaps less known to Europeans than those of the inhabitants of any other part of the world, and that we shall long remain in a great measure ignorant of their country and of their peculiarities, seems more than problematical.

The European constitution is ill adapted to contend with the miasma arising from the muddy, slimy, foetid banks of most of the rivers, and the generally swampy character of a great part of the coast, rife, as they are with fever, dysentery, and ague. The latter disease is attended with great emaciation and prostration of strength, and it seldom leaves you till you are on the blue water. It is not often fatal, and troublesome as intermittent fever is, it is hardly looked upon as an evil, for so long as you are the subject of it, you escape being attacked by the more deadly typhus. Should you escape being affected with one or all of these complaints,—and few, if any who go there do escape,—the intense heat of the climate,—

together with the bad effects of the dry, feverish harmattan or east winds, which prevail three months in the year, leave you in such a state of debility as to produce the usual concomitants,—the development of latent diseases,—even after a comparatively short residence

And yet this is not the only difficulty with which the inquisitive traveller has to contend. The natives, men, women, and children, are secret, even concerning things of the most trivial import, to a degree quite astonishing and incomprehensible to Europeans, particularly to Englishmen and Frenchmen. Perhaps the first word a child is taught to lisp is "*anemea*," I don't know. It is a futile task to attempt to extort any fact, even from a child or drunken person, contrary to his wish. What ideas you do obtain of their notions of good, evil, God, &c., will be from a chief or chief-priest, both of whom are, in some measure, beyond the consequences of tattling.

I once interrogated a boy whom I caught in the act of stealing a piece of cloth, as to what were his prospects in the next world, in the event of my causing him to be thrown overboard for the sharks to devour. "*Aneméa*," was the answer. "What," said I, "don't you know in what

country you will live after you leave this ?”  
 “Anemea, how should I know ? I be poor boy ,  
 go ‘ask gentleman’ I thought I would ask a  
 gentleman, or chief, who coolly replied that the  
 Ju-ju man (priest) knew every thing, and that  
 he was not a Ju-ju man, a fact he knew I was  
 well acquainted with I then applied to the Ju-  
 ju man, who, in his turn, pleaded that he was  
 not a gentleman, but a poor devil of a Ju-ju  
 man, and consequently knew nothing, and that  
 I had better give him a piece of cloth to make  
 Ju-ju palaver for my safe arrival in England at  
 the same time very respectfully referred me to  
 ‘ gentleman ’ who knew every thing

Now this reservedness did not proceed from  
 having no notion, though perhaps not a very de-  
 finite one, of a future state, but from a disincli-  
 nation to let one know any thing on any  
 subject

Then another great difficulty in the way of  
 acquiring or imparting information, or of indu-  
 cing them to adopt our more civilized customs,  
 is the almost unbounded influence of the priest-  
 hood, who exercise the power of life and death  
 to a fearful extent. For a very trifling infringe-  
 ment of their ecclesiastical laws (which are so  
 blended with civil laws, that it is an easy matter

to find occasion of offence), a chief is ordered to proceed some four or five months' journey, thither and back, into the interior, to consult the Grand Juju, as he is called, to the chief's great hinderance to business, and at no trifling expense and trouble. And what is worse than all, should he not come down with a handsome *douceur* in the shape of English goods to both the priests at home and the Grand Juju in the interior, he need never expect to find his way home again.

Innovation is dreaded by the priests. They have wit enough to know that if a slight advancement only, in civilization were made, it would rapidly progress, and their priestly power and arrogance would speedily be thrown off.

I will just relate a little circumstance in illustration of their disinclination to adopt European customs.

Observing a large guano crawl out of a hole in the mud floor of a king's sitting-room, while conversing with him about a *dask* or present I was to take him next voyage, I offered to bring him a quantity of flags or bricks, to lay the floor. He seemed pleased with the proposal and after musing a short time, replied, he would consult the priest and tell me the result. On calling next day he informed me that Juju

would not allow it. This is a small matter in itself, but sufficiently indicative of the power the priests exercise over, even their kings. Being subject to rheumatism, he is very kindly permitted to use a piece of board as a footstool, to protect him from the damp, during the rainy season

## CHAPTER II

### THE RIVER BONNY

The Bonny river and town—Birds—Fish—Quadrupeds—Snakes, and other Reptiles—Chameleon—Dying Fish—Insects—Harmattan or Smokes—Prickly-heat—Cro-cro—Tornadoes—Rainy season—King of Bonny—King Pepple and his attendants—Mode of sitting—Breakfast—Slave nailed to a cask—Their ingratitude

THE river Bonny lays nearly north and south and is about four miles wide at its mouth, and varies from three to four for about eight miles, where it receives a large tributary stream. Both sides of the river are covered with mangrove, and there are several mouths of creeks and small vias that open into it. When the tide recedes, and particularly at neap tides, in some parts of the river it is not more than two miles wide, and the mud banks which are left bare emit exceedingly noxious effluvia.

Four miles from the mouth on the east bank of the river, is situated the town of Bonny, called by the natives Culomi. The king and a few of the principal chiefs have their houses close to a creek on the north side of the town which during the rainy season is full almost to overflowing being nearly on a level with the floor of their houses. On paying visits, it is customary to pull up this creek in your boats, and land at the outer courts of their houses by pulling the boat along side of a piece of wood and clay embankment and stepping from the gunwale into the court. During the dry season the creek is nearly dried up.

There is no remarkable geographical feature in this river. Every part of its banks is low with the exception of an elevation of a few feet at Fish Town, a village on the opposite side. During the heavy rains most of the houses in the towns and villages are only accessible from the river side of the town, by wading up to the knees in mud and water. As might be expected, during this period, the natives suffer a good deal from fever and dysentery. There are a few giant cotton trees in Bonny town, and a clump of tall trees at Peter Fortis Point, or Peterside, a village a little above Bonny, and also on the opposite side of

the river, and there are here and there a few coconut trees, and some varieties of the palm. There is a small fringe of sandy beach between Bonny and Ju-ju town, a village, a mile within the mouth of the river, where the well known and respected friend of white men, Jack Brown, the pilot, his men and a few small chiefs reside. The rest of the scenery consists of water, mud-banks, and mangrove,—mangrove, water, and mud banks. There is hardly a hill the size of a mole hill to be seen, either on the banks of the river or along the course of the numerous creeks that intersect the country in every direction. There are very handsome cacti and some other flowers, with numerous parasitical plants, and an occasional lime, chili pepper, plantain, and banana is seen.

Birds of very beautiful plumage are numerous, and there are also a variety of species of wild fowl, and various species of vultures, and at some seasons white breasted birds of the crane species, congregate in great numbers on the mud banks, and devour the small fish and garbage left by the receding tide, but the songster is not heard, the only music you hear is the croaking of the bullfrogs and the beating of the wooden drums by slaves paddling about the river, or in the creeks,



on attending the Ju-ju palaver on shore. The music of the drums is far from being disagreeable. I never saw but one Pelican here. It was brought to me by some natives who shot it in a creek, during the rainy season, and was looked upon by them as a *rara avis*. I had it skinned and cooked, but it tasted too strong to be fit for the table.

The rivers and creeks supply the natives and visitors with abundance of fish of various kinds. the mullet and a large fine fish very like a salmon but not so rich, called salmon *inge*, are the commonest. The estuary is almost alive at certain seasons with black whales, porpoises, and shoals of fish, of a smaller fry. Sharks abound at all seasons, and almost certain destruction attends falling overboard, or getting out of your depth in bathing, or washing. These horribly voracious creatures, though of immense size, often seize human beings in the act of washing in shoal water. The master of the ship I traded one voyage, on returning from outside the estuary, whither he had gone with a vessel bound for home that he might make himself familiar with the bars, on returning during the night unfortunately upset the boat among some mangrove bushes, near to the Bonny town, when a shark seized an arm

of a poor Krouman and took it off by the shoulder joint. He looked wistfully at the captain and his comrades, who had got astride of the bottom of the boat,—turned his bleeding side towards them and was about to strike out for the boat, which had drifted a little way from him in the interim, with the remaining arm, when he was seized and swallowed by the monster. In this way, on the bottom of the boat, were the remainder during the night, drifted down the river, surrounded by sharks. Another Krouman who could not keep his seat was swallowed whole. It is no formidable undertaking for some species of this extraordinary fish to swallow a man whole, since it is not difficult for a man to pass through the widely-extended jaws of one in my possession, although it is thickly studded with very sharp rows of spear-like teeth. At day-break the boat had drifted to within a few fathoms of Breaker Island, an islet lying in the centre of the estuary, where a solitary fisherman was at work, but he, heedless of their distressed situation, continued to ply at his occupation. One of the few left on the boat, a sagacious Krou-lad of fifteen or sixteen years of age, bethought himself of an expedient to save himself and his companions. Watching an opportunity while the sharks were

gamboling about them, for a clear jump, he dived to the bottom, and being almost amphibious, from the habit of being so much in the water in his own country, crawling along the sandy bottom, he reached the island in safety, and induced the fisherman to put off in his canoe and pick the others up and take them all to the ship. I rewarded the fisherman well, although he had behaved so ill in not rescuing them sooner, both on account of the service he had rendered, and as an inducement for him and others to give assistance in future when required. Had he been as well acquainted with European customs as people that are daily among the ships, he would not have required prompting to go to their assistance, inasmuch as he would have known that a handsome reward would have followed his services. Perhaps he thought that they had been turned adrift for some bad conduct, and that by interfering he might place himself in the position of a culprit, liable to punishment or death. such a notion would be quite in accordance with the practice of chiefs in his own country.

Few quadrupeds approach near the coast except elephants. These animals may occasionally be seen in the dry season, in droves near the

mouth of the river where they go to bathe in the clear water, when a few hardy sportsmen will sally out to shoot them. Sometimes a solitary hippopotamus winding its way through the large creeks, enters the river for a short time, but soon returns to more congenial retreats, the banks affording little or no pasturage. There are but few deer, and fewer leopards and tigers, inasmuch as these and most wild animals fly the habitations of man.

Snakes and other reptiles are numerous the whip snake, centapede, and scorpion are the commonest. That singular and harmless reptile, the chameleon, is very scarce. I once kept one for ten weeks, during which period it appeared to live without food, for although I tried to tempt it to eat, with a variety of edibles, it tasted none of them, but from its habit of frequently shooting out its long, slender tongue, I supposed it supported life by insects too minute to be perceptible to the naked eye. In changing its colour, the chameleon is not comparable to the dolphin for the rapidity with which the changes take place, nor for the richness and depth of the colours. The sudden flashes in the dolphin from blue to gold, gold to white, and white to brown, or nearly black; or the gradual departure of one colour,

succeeded slowly by the almost imperceptible tint of another, which gradually deepening till it becomes intense and brilliant, is one of the most beautiful and extraordinary phenomena in natural history. That great, ugly, lazy, disgusting reptile, the guana, is domesticated, and has the honour of being the chief god of this river.

Mosquitos swarm in myriads, and are a dreadful pest to Europeans. Night after night have I laid awake, attempting to drive them away with my cigar and a native fan, longing for the cool breeze that sets in early in the morning, to carry them away before it. Sometimes it is absolutely necessary, to be enabled to procure any repose, to employ boys to fan you all night. This office two or three lads take in turns with the certainty of your awaking should they cease for one moment to agitate the air. The beach near to where the ships are moored, is sandy, and produces innumerable sand flies. These minute insects cause severe itching and irritation of the skin.

Thus and the adjacent rivers and the coast,—indeed all the country of the bights, is unquestionably the most unhealthy part of the world. The disease most fatal to Europeans, and to which they are most liable, is a fever of a low typhoid character, a disease that often runs

through its stages in a period barely sufficient to develope it in European countries

The harmattan or dry season which commences early in December, and continues for three months, is the most unhealthy part of the year. The winds which blow steadily from the north-east over the deserts, for days together, are loaded with minute particles of sand, causing the corners of the mouth, and the eyes and nostrils to feel very dry, sore, and hot. The nights are very hot and oppressive, and the air being stagnant, you have literally to gasp for breath. The seamen, often imprudently leaving their berths in the forecastle or their hammocks suspended from the rafters that form the frame-work of the housing of the ship, lay about the decks and render themselves exceedingly liable to this complaint. Europeans suffer dreadfully from prickly heat and the bites of mosquitos and sand-flies. Troublesome as the prickly-heat is, you are glad to put up with it, for its sudden disappearance is an almost certain precursor of fever, which you never take so long as it remains out. The skin is covered with a rash that causes intolerable itching, which is aggravated by the flannel garments which from prudential motives, are worn next the skin. The musquitto bites sometimes

ulcerate, and the troublesome itchy sores often remain open till either a more congenial season has approached, or you put to sea, and are cooled and refreshed by the sea breezes. The natives are subject to an affection called *cro-cro*, a disease that resembles a loathsome one in England, known under the name of the Scotch fiddle, though why it should be called the *Scotch*-fiddle I cannot surmise, as our Scotch neighbours are not more liable to it than their brethren of the south. The *cro-cro* is a very troublesome and disagreeable complaint causing the skin to peel off in patches, and leaving the surface rough, shining, and mottled, like leprosy. The country is so shrouded with dense exhalations, called *smokes*, that for days together you cannot see twice the length of the ship; and vessels that have anchored outside the bars, remain till they clear away. The tornadoes that commenced with great fury in November gradually decrease in strength and frequency, as the smoke or *harmattan* season advances, and continue with greater or less force and frequency till June.

March, April and May, are the healthiest months, the weather being calm and serene, and being accompanied with pleasant breezes, disease is less prevalent, though white men are liable to it at all seasons.

The rainy season sets in the latter end of May, or beginning of June, and continues till the middle or latter end of September. During July and August it rains almost incessantly, except for an hour or two in the middle of the day, and such rains when attended with squalls, it pours down, drenching you in a minute should you happen to be abroad unprovided with a good boat, cloak and a stout umbrella.

From the middle of September till the setting in of the dry season which may be said to continue till June, the weather is more settled and agreeable, resembling the months of March, April, and May.

The dominions of the King of Bonny extend a few miles beyond the town into the interior, and on each side of the river. His name is Pepple, and in speaking of, or in addressing him, he is designated King Pepple. He is a tall, thin, rather awkward looking man, about four or five and thirty years of age, of complexion inclined to yellow, mild expression of countenance—of perfect negro contour, in which cunning, doubt, and duplicity are blended. When not labouring under mental excitement, he is gentle in his manners, and professes to be, and I believe really is, greatly attached to his head wife, who is no other



than his own sister. Pepple's queen and sister is the most amiable black woman I have ever known. She is kind, gentle, and affectionate, and loves the hog, her lord, supremely, and one would think could not deceive him in anything, yet I have seen her, when his majesty has been doling out his country money to purchase household things, with a good deal of address, secret a coin or two, at the same time silyly wink at me to keep silent, so strongly implanted in their nature, enforced by habit, is the propensity to steal. "Show me a black man, and I will show you a thief," has become proverbial with us.

Pepple's arms and legs are too long to be proportionate to the rest of his body. His hands are small, his fingers long and tapering, one, at least of which, is usually encircled with a gold ring of no great value. His feet are of enormous proportions, being nearly twelve inches long, the big toe of one or both being garnished with a common metal ring, and one or both ankles with an anklet of metal or ivory. His palace, as he insists on having his wattle and dab house called, is as humble as the dwellings of his subjects, though in his own estimation, no doubt, it is a very splendid place.

His majesty is the most opulent chief in this

part of the country, for independent of large sums ground out of his subjects, every ship that goes to trade within its territory pays a considerable amount in goods for that privilege, so that his revenue is a very handsome thing, yet he engages largely in commercial affairs. Notwithstanding, he is often embarrassed in his circumstances or would have white man believe so, to induce them to come forward and meet his wants with a *dash* or present. One might wonder why he should harass and perplex himself with trade, when he has such ample means of living and keeping up his state, entirely independent of it, if not aware that wrangling and trying to cheat the white men with whom he deals and the black men that take his English goods to market to trade for palm oil and provisions of various kinds, constitute one of his greatest sources of pleasure, as it does of all his countrymen. Without trade, having no acquaintance with books or hardly any other source of intellectual amusement, their time would pass very irksomely.

Having business with him, I called one morning at his house, or palace, since he will have it so, and found him seated at his breakfast-table, attended by a girl about ten years of age, just budding into womanhood, in a complete state of

nudity, and two or three lazy lads of about the same age. In England, the girl would be called a child,—in Africa, undoubtedly a woman. The expression of the countenance was that of modesty and extreme submissiveness,—the sort of expression so graphically portrayed in the countenance and figure of the slave presenting the vessel of water to Pilot, in Smirke's magnificent painting of Christ at Pilot's Judgment Seat. ●

It was the duty of the female, only, to administer to his sable Majesty's wants. The boys sat at a little distance, in their country fashion, which is precisely similar to that adopted by children when about to engage in a juvenile game called leap-frog.

The meal consisted of the ordinary viands of men of rank, namely —obéoca, inge, fou-fou, fou-lou, and tomeneroo, anglice, fowl, fish, mashed yam, soup, and tombo, or palm wine, served up in vessels, in which size, quality, and pattern had not been studied, and placed on the table without any thing like taste, or even much regard to order.

On this man's countenance, usually so placid and perfectly indifferent on the reception of visitors, was a slight expression of self-approbation, as of one, who in violence to his own feelings, had

done a good action. The day being fine, he was sitting in an open court of his house near a doorway leading from his sleeping apartment, over which a projecting roof protected him from the scorching rays of a vertical sun.

On his left in the open court, stood perfectly erect a fine looking, intelligent negro, opposite the door by which my friend and I had entered, with his back to a huge water cask, to which his hands were stretched out and nailed,—a ten apenny nail being driven through the palm of each hand, and plaited on the inside of the cask. “Halloo,” we simultaneously exclaimed, “what palaver now King?” “Chi,” he said with great nonchalance, ‘ dat fellow be big tief ’ “Well, what has he stolen?” “Better you take some chop,” (all kinds of food is called chop,) ‘ and then I must tell a you ’ So we folded up our white cotton jacket sleeves, and assisted his majesty to discuss fou-fou, ingo, &c., without knife, fork, or spoon, and were informed that the slave undergoing punishment had been sent that morning on board one of the ships, moored hard by in the river, for half a dozen white ship biscuits, and had returned with only five and some fragments. Whether or not he had been supplied on board ship with six biscuits, I cannot say,

but think it likely enough he had not, as they are so liable to get broken in the passage from England, and in unpacking. However the king thought he had, and that was quite sufficient to bring down upon him the vengeance of this irresponsible tyrant.

After a little palavering with the king, we got leave and set about liberating the prisoner, and a hard job we had to draw out the nails with a pair of strong pincers. The prisoner begged us "pad" (pardon) and "tank" (thanked) us a thousand times and looked really grateful, but so completely devoid is the West African of gratitude, that I have no doubt he would have cut either of our throats half an hour afterwards to obtain a striped cotton shirt not worth a shilling, if he were sure of escaping detection and punishment.

## CHAPTER III

### POLYGAMY

**Polygamy—Wives—King of Ashantee—Wives of Chiefs—Most of the wives purchased—Children offered for sale—A chief perplexed with his wives—Head slaves allowed two or three wives—Women giving birth to twins or bearing more than four are put to death—Awful punishment for incontinency—Treatment of the old and infirm—Woman stolen by Bosjesmans—Treatment of captives.**

IN no Eastern country is polygamy practised in such excess as on the Western coast of Africa, for there a man's desire for women is only bounded by the extent of his resources to procure them.

Solomon was a King of great moderation, when compared with the King of Ashantee, who possesses no fewer than three thousand three hundred and thirty three wives, a mystical number, which on the occasion of a death, is instantly filled up out of a number of girls kept in reserve for that purpose

Higher up the Gulph of Guinea the pecuniary means of the kings and chiefs are more limited, consequently they are obliged to confine themselves to a more moderate number. I know several residing on the banks of the rivers to the east of, and communicating with the Niger or Qurra, and of the adjacent rivers, who have from fifty to three hundred. The head wife or queen, so styled by the kings and chiefs since England has lately had a Queen for Sovereign, is generally the daughter of a person of some distinction among them, and her children, if she present her husband with no more than four, and these singly, are looked upon as somewhat superior to those of other wives, most of whom are brought from the interior where they are purchased of their parents for a trifle when children or young persons. I have had children offered to me for sale, of seven or eight years of age, for a quarter barrel (25lbs) of voyage gunpowder and two pieces of common printed cotton, worth in all about fifteen shillings.

Their gross outrage of the laws of God and nature, in this, as in other cases, meets with the punishment of chagrin and disappointment, as few of the men are fathers of more than one or two children, notwithstanding their exceedingly

great anxiety to become fathers of a numerous offspring. And to keep such a number of women in order is no easy matter. I have seen a chief so perplexed and distressed after being worried almost to death by a lot of wives, jealous because he had presented one of them with a bunch of beads or some other trifling thing, that he has been constrained to acknowledge that "white man fashion be best, he have only one wife".

A few of the head slaves of the kings and great chiefs are allowed one or two and sometimes three wives, whose offspring is more numerous than the wives of their masters. But in the Bonny, woe be to the women who have two children at a birth or who ever become mothers of more than four, for then the children are destroyed and the women vanished.

The greatest possible insult you can offer an inhabitant of this place, is to call him "*nam-a-shoobia*" meaning one of twins, or as they would say, half a man. *nam-a-shoobia* also conveys the idea of being the son of one of the lower animals. The fiend-like expression of the countenance of a chief when applying this dreadful blasphemous language to a slave, with arm and two open fingers extended, pointing at the unlucky offender and thus intimating by sign as well as speech that



he is only half a man, is one of those displays of human passion often witnessed but not easily to be described or forgotten.

From the unnatural manner in which women are distributed amongst this portion of the "lords of creation," it need not be wondered at that the lower class of slaves, which compose the great bulk of the population, and the women generally, should not be proverbial for continency. When one of the lower class of wives is found guilty or strongly suspected of irregularities, the husband satisfies himself with "cow-hiding" his mistress with a whip composed of thongs of twisted bullock's hide, dried in the sun, and wrapped with copper wire. The real or imaginary culprit being tied to a rafter of the wattle and dab house, her arms at full stretch above her head, the brute of a husband commences the operation of flagellation which he prolongs over a space of twelve or eighteen hours, administering to the unfortunate wight a heavy thwack with his formidable instrument of torture every fifteen or twenty minutes, on the bare back and shoulders, the woman shouting "anemea" ( I don't know ) and "ofourie" ( a general negative ) at the extent of her voice till lost in a grunt or groan.

I was seated one afternoon in the house of the

then most powerful chief in the Bights of Benin and Biafra, when three men suddenly entered, dragging and pushing before them the chief's first woman, said to have been caught in criminal conversation with the brother of a neighbouring chief, shrieking and making the most violent efforts to escape. After a short conversation had passed between the chief and his slaves, not one word of which I understood, for it was in a language foreign to that spoken on that part of the coast, the chief suddenly drew from an alligator's skin scabbard attached to his side with a handkerchief, a large knife of native manufacture, twelve inches long and three broad, at the broadest part, spear-pointed and sharp on both sides, and in an instant plunged it into the woman's body and ripped her up. A knife precisely similar to the one described now lays before me. Her legs, arms and head being hacked off with blunt swords by the three slaves while the unhappy creature yet breathed, were thrown, along with the trunk, into a creek to feed the sharks, with which this country abounds.

But certainly the most ingenious punishment for this offence is that by "sa-ne" (cayenne pepper). The first time I witnessed a scene of this description, both the man and his paramour were

operated upon at one and the same time, and notwithstanding the severe discipline they were subjected to, my risible faculties were powerfully excited. The culprits were thrown on the ground and held by the arms and legs by two powerful men, while men and women belonging to the household, promiscuously stuffed every opening in the body with bruised cayenne pepper, the poor wretches meanwhile screaming and writhing in intense agony. As usual, I interfered, but was quickly met with the interrogatory "what ting you want my captain, must I kill 'em?"

One of the first things that strikes a person on mixing with the inhabitants, is the number of persons he meets with, blind of one eye. I have often asked the cause, but could never get a satisfactory answer. Cayenne used in the way mentioned would be sure to produce inflammation, which would probably terminate in the loss of the sight of one or both eyes, though undoubtedly some may become blind from the effects of the sun's rays. In the event of both eyes being lost, it is likely that the sufferer would be taken to a solitary place in the bush, or on the beach, and there left to perish, as it is not an uncommon thing to see an old or infirm person, afflicted perhaps with leprosy, banished from his home and his

mends, such as they are make a shield with a bamboo mat and a couple of ticks, gather a few branches of trees and leaves, make a fire and lay down and die. Parents and children when diseased and good for nothing too often suffer the same fate as the slaves. According to the Levitical law, lepers were not allowed to remain within the camp, but who can suppose that they were not fed and taken care of without, and heathen writers as Tacitus and Cicero are full of maxims inculcating kindness and affection under affliction and adversity, but this people seem lost to all sense of shame, affection, and gratitude.

Before closing this chapter I must not forget to mention a tale told me by one of the chief Juja men of the country, of the Bosjesmans or Bushmen. A remnant of this race appears to be scattered over almost every part of Africa, although, so far as we are acquainted, confined principally to Southern Africa. They appear to be quite a distinct people. The Bosjesmans lead a wild, wandering, lawless life. They are lean and of low stature,—the colour of their skin is a dirty yellow-brown,—their noses are flat, cheek bones high, and their physiognomy bears some of the other characteristic features of the Hottentots. They are neither shepherds nor husbandmen, but

live on wild animals, fish, locusts, snakes, and insects, roots and fruits, and in the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope, by stealing cattle and committing other depredations on the settled inhabitants. Their dress consists of the skins of wild animals or sheep tied round their necks, sandals of bullock's leather bound round their feet and a dirty greasy cap on their heads. A bow and a few poisoned arrows, a calabash and a broken ostrich egg, and two or three grass mats, constitute the rest of their utensils, furniture, and paraphernalia. Their language is a clacking sound of the tongue, their sentences terminating with a peculiar drawl.

A wife of one of the chiefs of Bonny suddenly disappeared and returned to her home after a long absence. It appears that while fishing one day in a creek near the Andoney river, a horde of Bushmen set upon her and hurried her into the bush to a subterraneous dwelling where from fifteen to twenty of these people were congregated. Being a fine young woman, the head of this gang of marauders made her his wife. During her incarceration in this place several captives were brought and made to undergo almost unheard of tortures previous to being eaten. Each wrist of the victim being tied with cords made of split

rough tendrils to its corresponding ankle, first one ear is cut off, then the other, then follows the nose, after this an eye is gorged out and a piece of wood ember dropped into the socket, then the other eye, the lips and tongue follow next, and so on to the other parts of the body, which I forbear, from feelings of delicacy to the reader, to mention

## CHAPTER IV

### 'SLAVERY

**Slavery** Condition of slaves at home—Olo sacrifices a man every day—Human sacrifices to the dead—Fear of white men—Revolting crimes—Slave trade unlawful

**SLAVERY** at the best is a bitter draught and none drink it more to the dregs than the great majority of the African slaves at home

Formerly, Englishmen laboured under the common but false impression that most of the slaves deported from Africa were in much the same state of society at home regarding their freedom, as the poorer classes in this country, and the pictures, and poetry depicting their capture by white men, inducing commiseration of their unhappy condition by the kind but mistaken friends of this persecuted people, tended to foster the idea

For any number of Europeans to capture and

carry away a negro, is next to impossible. As well might a child attempt to enter a lion's den and carry away a half grown lion from its parents. Landing on the coast at all is often a difficult matter, and captains of men of war as well as of merchant ships are indebted to the service of native pilots for piloting their ships into and out of harbour. Besides if the natives are so minded, they can betake themselves to the bush, or thread their way through long, narrow, tortuous creeks, in their canoes to places of safety, at least from the white pursuer.

The negroes sold to the nefarious traffickers in slaves, are already in a state of slavery. Properly speaking there are only two classes of people in Africa, the master and the slave. Among the latter may be classed nearly all the women, who, though called wives, are virtually in a state of bondage. The master a proud, cruel, despotic tyrant, whose will is his law, the slave a poor, miserable, degraded piece of mechanism, subject in body and mind to a capricious and degraded master. An English donkey is a comparatively happy creature, and much less inhumanely treated, or its master falls under the lash of the officer of a humane society,—the negro has no law to protect him, and he is usually ill fed, worse clothed and lodged,



has no will of his own, and his master can sell, or maim, or kill him at discretion

Imagine to yourself Olo, king of a country a few days journey from the coast, sacrificing a human being every morning under the notion of propitiating his gods, and in a way too one would think could hardly be surpassed for barbarity. Sometimes his majesty, with the concurrence of the priests, chooses to have the victim crucified in the way commonly practised by the ancient Romans, with the head downwards, and sometimes, though less frequently, the victim suffers the horrid death of impalation.

On learning the above facts from Awanta, a very intelligent Ju-ju man, I remarked to him, "would it not be better for king Ólo to sell three hundred and sixty five men every year and sacrifice some animal of less value?" "True" he said with some bitterness (he had been a great slave dealer and was ruined in consequence of the suppression of the slave trade in that part of the coast) "but you English no will" (wont allow us to traffic in slaves)

Or imagine a Grand Duke sacrificing several hundred slaves at one time to his diseased predecessor! Of these some are buried alive in one common grave; some are lashed on their backs

to bamboo sticks and mats, and are floated down the river till picked up by the large, horrid ground sharks, and the rest disposed of not less inhumanly

A great deal has been written and said on the cruelty formerly practised on the slaves in our West India colonies, and no doubt severe censure was merited; but their lot was happiness compared to their wretched condition at home. Were an offer made to the newly imported African bred slaves to convey them home again, and land them at their former master's door, I am persuaded the offer would be rejected in ninety nine cases out of every hundred. •

The slave dreads falling into the hands of white men from the mistaken notion that he is to be fed and eaten, or immolated at the shrine of their gods; but this fear is, no doubt, soon dissipated, when he finds that he has daily only so much work to do, that he is better fed, allowed to marry, taken care of in old age, and has the sabbath and saint days, in catholic countries, to idle away his time, or receive religious instruction.

The African slave, at home, is unquestionably the most degraded being on the face of the earth. Crimes of the greatest enormity and the most revolting to humanity—crimes which caused the destruction by fire of two of the largest cities in

the world, nearly four thousand years ago, are committed daily, and that with the knowledge of the chiefs and priests, who look upon their abominations as a matter of course. Even animals (I will not call them the lower animals) are made the unwilling participants of the odiousness arising out of such an unnatural state of society.

The question naturally arises, what can be done for them? Change their fetters from a black to a white master? By such a step, no doubt, their moral and physical condition would be greatly advanced. But there are two words to be spoken to it—"we must not do evil that good may come." "And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" are the words of unerring truth. Many of the slaves sold to white men are stolen, and intestine wars fermented thereby, and as the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief, the purchasing of slaves is equally unlawful as stealing them. Civilizing and christianizing them in their own country are the only legitimate means. These are being tried with but indifferent success, and according to all human probability, ages must pass away before the African can take his place among the civilized nations of the earth.

None are more opposed to the deporting of slaves from Africa, than British merchants and their agents, for if uninfluenced by higher motives, self-interest alone, would induce them to oppose slavery, as where the natives are allowed to carry it on, all legitimate employments are stopped, for they will neither manufacture oils, bees' wax, gather gums, hunt elephants, or follow any other occupation whatever, to enable them to procure English goods.

In the words of a great divine, "I here register my testimony against the unprincipled, anti-christian, and diabolical Slave Trade, with all its authors, promoters, abettors, and sacrilegious gains, as well as against the Great Devil, the father of it and them."

## CHAPTER V

### FETISH

**Ju-ju or Fetish—Different things termed Ju-ju—The Guana venerated—Consequences of injuring one—Ju ju house and its decorations—Traders made sacred—Paying Visits.**

THE word Ju-ju is of very significant but of varied meaning. The fetish man or priest is called Ju-ju; so is the chapel and the altar. The tutelar gods, such as the guana, shark, turkey-bustard, monkey, snake, &c., are also called Ju ju. What is Ju-ju in one locality is eaten or despised and hunted down in another. In the Bonny the guana, an ugly reptile, five or six feet long, of the lizard species, is the principal Ju-ju, and is held in the greatest veneration. The priests are very capricious, and sometimes take into their heads to destroy one Ju-ju, and elevate another animal into its position. Ten years ago, the

monkey was Ju ju on the left bank of the Bonny River, but something having been stolen in a very mysterious manner, the monkeys got the credit of the theft, and priests and people had some battue days, and destroyed and eat hundreds. I happened to be there at the time, and many a fine old grey-bearded fellow did I see brought down from his perch, thrown for a few minutes on a wood fire till the hair was singed off, but before being a quarter cooked was eagerly devoured by the hungry slaves. Nor did the Ju-ju men decline to eat a tender morsel.

The guana has had his head above water from time immemorial. It is allowed to crawl about the houses and chapels, and if it should seize a fowl or other domestic animal belonging to the poorest person, it is allowed to devour it without molestation.

Whenever a person of the highest rank meets a guana in a narrow pathway, he politely steps aside, and often addresses it in terms of praise and supplication.

A small guana having been taken accidentally on board a ship, in an empty palm oil cask, on crawling out was observed by a chief, who expressed great alarm and anxiety for its safety, but assured us it was a happy omen for the ship and

crew, the one would be well loaded with African produce on her departure from his country, and the other preserved from sickness. After addressing a few words of caution to it, he carefully took it in his arms, but not without a good deal of resistance on the part of the reptile, placed it in his canoe, and pulling ashore, landed it gently on the beach.

Another instance of a guana finding its way on board ship had nearly been attended with tragical consequences. One of the coopers not being aware that the guana is Ju ju, nor consequently of the consequences that would arise from any injury done to it, cut about a foot of its tail. Several scores of natives were on board at the time, and were so alarmed that they all instantly betook themselves to their canoes in the greatest trepidation, every moment expecting the ship would sink, or be struck with lightning, for his having dared to offer such an indignity to one of their gods. Formal demand was made by the priests, through the king, for the perpetrator of this awfully sacrilegious act to be given up to them for punishment, which would certainly be death, and every native was interdicted trading with the ship, or even going on board under the heaviest penalty. This is called "putting mark for ship."

The trade of the ship being thus arrested, and the prospects of the trader and owner ruined for that voyage, unless conciliatory steps could be taken, and arrangements made with the king and the Ju-ju men, a meeting took place between the natives and the traders, and it was ultimately arranged that the ship should pay a large quantity of goods, on condition of the cooper being pardoned, and the interdict regarding trade removed.

White cloth is Ju-ju, and the wearing of this colour is confined to the kings and priests. Great quantities are used for Ju-ju purposes, such as burying with their dead and decorating sacrifices.

In New Calabar the shark is Ju-ju, and cloth or any other article having on it the figure of any animal or thing is Ju-ju, but in a sense different to white cloth in the Bonny, for it is not worn or used in any way.

The breeches and boots of kings, which are used only on state occasions, and in which they appear to be as comfortable as one might imagine a man to be in the pillory, are Ju-ju to every body but themselves, since no other person in their dominions are allowed to wear them.

In the same sense an umbrella is Ju-ju to the



slave, its use being confined to the kings, chiefs, and priests

The European trader is made Ju-ju the first day he goes on shore in that capacity, and I wish I could add that he is always religiously regarded as a sacred person, for he has occasionally been placed in irons and I have every reason to believe that life has sometimes been taken by the administration of a very subtle poison.

As I mentioned before, the vessels are taken into the rivers by native pilots, where all their movements are strictly watched by the king's emissaries

Immediately on putting foot on shore you are conducted to a Ju-ju house. The Ju-ju house is an oblong building forty feet by thirty, made of wattle and dab with a mud floor, and decorated with human skulls and other human bones, and the bones of some animals. A mud altar at the upper end of the room is raised three feet above the floor on which is a little deal table and urn and tombo in square glass bottles placed thereon; also a little wine in a common black bottle, a few tumblers and wine glasses and other choice articles which had been begged or stolen on board ship. On the wall above the table is usually hanging a very rude carved figure of a guana, and

on each side of the table a large elephant's tusk carved in the same rude manner with the figure of a guana, of tobacco pipes, and imaginary figures of things neither in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. In front and on each side of the altar, is a number of drums, of different sizes and tones, made out of solid pieces of wood, on which on particular occasions, two or three men discourse very indifferent music by striking first one and then another, with the greatest rapidity, with a short stick, so as to produce a kind of tune. A priest in attendance leads you to the altar, and after pronouncing a few words in unintelligible jargon, dips his fore finger into a hole in the centre of the altar, containing apparently nothing but soft mud, and makes a dirty mark, the size of a wafer, between the eyebrows. He then rings a bell suspended from the roof, for a minute or two, and a novice presents you with a pint glass of tombo. The priest now shakes hands with you, the ceremony being completed, and you are Ju-ju, the dirty mark on your forehead being the distinguishing characteristic.

Then commence the visits of ceremony and business. If it happen to be the rainy season, the ground is very wet and dirty, and as there

are no other beasts of burthen, you mount the top of the shoulders of a stout negro, and sit astride his neck, and laying hold of his woolly hair to keep you steady, trot about from house to house. At every house you are expected to take tombo, to decline doing so on the first visit, would be considered a want of courtesy or of confidence. The liquor, however, is grateful to the palate, and refreshing and stimulating withal. Your round of calls occupies several hours, and before it is completed, yourself and hack are heartily tired. Next day is usually occupied in breaking trade, as it is called, that is, making or rather fulfilling treaty with the king.

## CHAPTER VI

### FETISH

Ju ju room and decorations—Making Ju-ju—Amulets—Ceremonies over the dead—Feeding the dead—Music—Anniversary of the death of the king's mother—Shaving—Acting dead men—Grief at loss of friends.

EVERY gentleman has his Ju-ju room, every great gentleman his priest, and the poorest householder erects a little altar, and ornaments it with such articles of vertu as he can command. I have often seen a sheet of Punch's Picture Gallery, or a sketch from the Illustrated London Newspaper occupy a conspicuous place; and a carving of a bird or tortoise of their own rough and unskilful workmanship, with a tobacco pipe or two, a paper snuff box, and an empty bottle comprise its decorations. If the proprietor be fortunate enough to possess rum or tombo, it is

there sanctuarized, none but himself daring to approach the holy place; so that in one sense he may be said to be his own priest.

A gentleman never leaves his house on pleasure, or business, nor returns to it without going to the altar and pouring out a little tombo' or rum into a glass dipping a finger into it, and touching various parts of his body, at the same time muttering a prayer, and after partaking of a little, pouring the remainder on the ground, as a libation to his Ju-ju.

An amulet is always worn round the neck, and one is often worn on each arm and leg, and another carried in the hand. Without this safeguard he never leaves the precincts of his domains; with it, he fears neither devil, nor anything else, always excepting Ju-ju. The priests find a lucrative trade in the manufacture and sale of these precious Ju jus, made of bones or wood, and twisted with wire, and bedaubed with blood and mud, and stuck with feathers.

The kings and chiefs are buried in the grand Ju-ju houses. As soon as a person dies, all the household collect about the body, and the women commence a dreadful howl, in the Irish style, which they continue for several hours, till quite hoarse and exhausted. They are allowed a

liberal quantity of intoxicating liquors, to enable them to keep up the ullaloo. Among the Jews the Sanhidrin were obliged to make a decree, to restrain the drinking to *ten* cups of wine each, on similar occasions. It would be well if these women were restricted to the same quantity of rum and tombo. Numbers of goats and fowls are immediately sacrificed for the benefit of the deceased, and the body is sprinkled with the warm blood. The headless bodies of the fowls are laid upon the corpse, and when they flap their wings, which they are almost sure to do immediately after decapitation, it is looked upon as a happy omen for the future welfare of the dead. At each flap, till life becomes extinct, the whole of the spectators simultaneously make a deep expiation, producing a sound similar to that issuing from a paver, when using with his greatest force a heavy beater. The corpse, wrapped in white cloth and decorated with glass beads, is placed, without a coffin, in a deep hole prepared for its reception, the face being the only part of the body left uncovered. A woman with a looking-glass, now steps into the grave, and crying, or feigning to cry, holds it directly over the face, then on each side of the face, meanwhile calling upon the dead person to speak or get up. A jar of rum is pla-

ced at the head, and a quantity of cloth and beads, with other articles most valued by the deceased, thrown into the grave, every friend or acquaintance contributing a fathom of cloth, or some other little article in token of respect Tombo and rum are freely circulated while this ceremony is proceeding, and not a few become intoxicated before the grave is filled up.

At certain periods for many years afterwards, a grand Ju-ju day is held in honour of the dead. The priest and the members of the family put on their holiday garb. Drums are beat, elephant's tusks with two or three holes bored in them to produce different tones, are blown, demijons struck on the mouth with the palm, in short, a concatenation of most inharmonious sounds is produced, and a regular hubbub created. Into a round hole left at the head of the grave, a quantity of mashed yam, squeezed into balls, is dropped, and gallons of tombo out of calabashes poured down. The ceremony concludes with drinking tombo to intoxication.

The people are greatly alarmed at the thoughts of dying, away from their friends, where attention in this way might not be paid to the Ju-ju

A boy whom I had invited to accompany me to England, made this his only objection.

“What way I do,” said he, “’pose I die for Allah minge,” at sea, “no man live for “big water” to give cloth to Ju-ju. The expression “Allah” minge or God’s water, must have been got from the Mahomedan priests in the interior, as it is well known that there are some at Sockatoo, Yaoorie, Boosa, and other parts on the Niger.

On the anniversary of the death of a near relation of the king, all the traders, and captains, and surgeons, are invited to dine with his majesty. A substantial dinner is provided chiefly by the shipping, and served up in the English style. Dinner being over, plates, dishes, mustard-pot, glasses, and every article of crockery-ware, are dashed against the side of the room, and three times three cheers given. This is considered as a great honour offered to both the dead and the living.

For several successive days after a death takes place, women walk about the towns singing or chanting a melancholy dirge in honour of the virtues of the deceased. They go two and two having hold of each others hands like children. One of the first two improvises a short sentence or two, and the other occasionally strikes a dem-  
mon, which produces a low, hollow, unmusical



sound, the rest joining in chorus, clap their hands in time to the demijon.

The survivors further express their grief for the dead by causing their heads and other parts of their bodies to be shaved, and by laying aside all finery and each wearing only a piece of grass cloth of native manufacture, the size of a pocket handkerchief, such as is used by the adult male slaves.

The operation of shaving is performed by old women who are very expert at their business. They begin at the crown of the head and soon proceed over other parts of the body, where their office is called for without using lather, or even a strop to sharpen the two-shilling-per-dozen razor, but frequently draw it across the palm of the hand. The bare idea of having one's chin operated on by such a barber with such an instrument is enough to 'bring tears into' one's eyes.

I must not forget to mention a curious custom which I never but once witnessed. Having had occasion to see King Pepple on pressing business, I called at his house early one morning but did not find him at home. The promise of a bunch of beads induced one of his women to direct me to a large Ju-ju house where I found his majesty, along with a dozen of his principal sub-

jects, wrapped in cloaks and blankets stretched on the floor apparently assuming the character of dead men. The king spoke a few words requesting me to call some other day; however I went in the evening and again next morning and found them still there and in the same position. On asking the king what they meant by personating dead men, he said "it be for my father." As the remains of his father lay in that Ju-ju house no doubt it was intended as an act of service or respect.

I have seen the African really distressed on the death of a relation, particularly if a child. My coxswain not having made his appearance for a whole day I called at his house to enquire the reason of his absence and found him in great distress shedding tears abundantly. He was a man of forty or forty five, and had two wives, but only one child. His child, about a year old had died. I asked him the cause of his child's death. "Oh," said he, "it be God Almighty's palaver," an intimation that it had not been destroyed by witchcraft or any other unlawful means. "Well then my good fellow" I replied, "don't weep, God Almighty knows best what to do with your child." "True," said he, "but he was my son and I no have a tother, — I have no other child.

They have sometimes a strange way of expressing their grief, though perhaps the grief is not less real for their odd way of showing it. Having to call upon a small trader of the name of Antipo, one of the most intelligent men in the place, and who had been in England when a boy and spoke very fair english, I found him half drunk but evidently in trouble. He presented me with tombo saying "drink captain I be very glad to day, my mother be dead" I expressed my surprise at his rejoicing "Chi" said he "it be best, my mother was old woman, I no be young boy. Suppose I had died first what would have become of my mother Any body might have kicked her—and said go to h—what place you son live now, you have no son."

The above elegant English of Antipo is a mild specimen, not very creditable however to the sailors of by-gone days, to whom the African is indebted for such a knowledge of the English language as he does possess.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SACRIFICES

**Sacrifices—Goats and fowls sacrificed—Wear live fowls about their bodies—Decapitating sacrifices and sprinkling the blood—Getting up a Ju-ju—Goats sacrificed—Impaling tortoise**

WHETHER the African's notion of sacrifices have been traditionally handed down from Moses or are of a date anterior to his institutions, is not our province to consider.

It may however be remarked, in passing, that after the manner of the Hebrews their objects of sacrifice are clean, as the goat, and what would perhaps be esteemed by the Jews as eligible for the purpose, the domestic fowl; and must be perfect, "without spot and blemish," and that the blood is sprinkled and never eaten.

On the other hand, after the custom of ancient heathens, tombo which is as much the national

beverage of the African as wine was of the Jews and their gentile neighbours, is poured upon the living animal and the offerer is almost covered with blood from head to foot and he keeps himself in that condition for a length of time

Unlike the Jewish priest, the African—resembling his brother heathen of old the Egyptian, Carthaginian, and Greek,—is always under the influence of intoxicating liquors whilst performing sacrifices, and often to such a degree as to prevent him being able to distinguish between clean and unclean animals; indeed hard drinking constitutes a very considerable element of all their religious observances and amusements

Their present well being seems to be the great object in view in making their ordinary sacrifices, and has not reference either to their past sins or hopes of a future state, neither are they considered in any way figurative of things to come.

Their manner of devoting animals to their gods fills one with horror and disgust, fully exemplifying the exclamation of the psalmist, "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty"

"In traversing the irregularly built towns you can hardly fail coming within the precincts of a house where you do not find some animal

in an agonizing position at the shrine of one of their gods. Domestic fowls are mostly used for sacrifices because they are the cheapest. They are generally tied by the legs to a post or branch of a tree with the head hanging downwards, and there left till death releases them from their misery and are afterwards allowed to remain till they decompose and drop to pieces.

If a man be at all unwell he wears a live chicken within his shirt, if he happen to have one on, tied round his neck and laying upon his breast. When the poor bird flaps its wings or chirps, the man considers it a happy sign, supposing the bird to be suffering pain he expects soon to be released from, or which otherwise he would have to endure.

When the blood of the fowl is intended to be used sacrificially the priest holds the bird in his left hand and a slave takes hold of the head; the priest then at one stroke with a knife severs the head and holds the neck tight to prevent the blood being too suddenly discharged.

The recipients of a sacrificial favour now step forward, and the priest, slackening the hand that grasps the neck, allows a few drops of blood to flow, which he sprinkles on various parts of their bodies, and at the same time touches their fore-

heads and sometimes other parts, with the body of the fowl.

I have seen this favour extended to a slave with an iron collar round his neck and chained by it to a door post, for some offence or other, like an English bull-dog, reminding one of the treatment of slaves in pagan Rome

When the head Ju-ju man of a town or village is a little "hard up" from losses in trade or gambling, he holds a grand Ju-ju day and all the inhabitants present themselves for priestly favours. Each individual presents the priest with a crooked piece of copper worth about twopence halfpenny, called a manilla, and a fowl, and in return receives a touch of the fowl he has just handed to the priest. By this means of "raising the wind" the priest will realize as much in one day as will keep him for many weeks. Sometimes the fowls are returned to the poor people, and they are occasionally hung on sticks or branches of trees near the priest's house and are considered in some sense Ju-ju, as no native is allowed to touch them; but an European may, and I have taken as many at one time as made a good mess for all hands on board ship.

Live goats, like fowls, are exposed near their dwellings and often within a few feet of the spot where the gentleman takes his meals and receives

company. The hind feet of the animal are placed together and tied to a post or tree six or seven feet from the ground. The fore-feet are then taken hold of and tied below, the animal being at full stretch; or the head is placed uppermost, just according to the caprice of the sacrificer. The head and the whole of the body is now tightly lashed to it which causes great pain as you may learn from its complaining. They will sometimes remain for a whole day in this position before life becomes extinct. Decomposition rapidly takes place, and the smell of the putrid carcass is so exceedingly offensive and noxious as to be very likely to produce the diseases they are intended, among other blessings, to cure or avert.

When the animal is designed for sudden destruction its head is held by a slave, and a priest, or the master of the house in the absence of a priest, suddenly draws a knife across its throat and cuts it to the spine. Some part of every person's body is touched with it and a little of the blood daubed upon him. It is then gutted and thrown upon a fire, partially cooked, and afterwards eagerly eaten.

The harmless tortoise, impelled on a short stake is occasionally seen in the inner courts of their houses, but whether placed there as an offering



or out of mere wantonness and a love of cruelty, I cannot say

In closing this chapter on the sacrifice of the lower animals, I wish I could close my account of their religious barbarities. Still greater inhumanities have to be described as practised on their fellow man

## CHAPTER VIII

### HUMAN SACRIFICES

Nailing prisoners—Jack Ketch—Decapitation—Cooking and eating human flesh—Priests—King Pepple eats King Amacree's heart—Sacrifice human beings to the god of the bar—Shipwreck

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Nothing so much excites an Englishman's disgust to the African character as their sacrificing human beings, and the way they afterwards dispose of them.

Prisoners of war are bound hand and foot and thrown into the bottom of their canoes or nailed by the hands to the gunwale and thus brought home to be sacrificed and eaten. Truly "their throat is an open sepulchre" Neither women nor helpless children are spared. An adult is too heavy for the masts of their canoes to bear, but it is not an uncommon thing to see infants and children brought down from the interior hanging from the slender masts, suspended by the middle

The office of Jack Ketch, when the victim is intended for sacrifice, properly belongs to the priest. The method of taking life is by decapitation with a sword or matchet. The instant the head falls, the priest seizes it, and biting a mouthful off the neck, swallows it. For ordinary executions, each chief has his heads-man.

But when a number of prisoners are brought home after a skirmish, the kings and chiefs select their victims, and act as so many Jack Ketches, and the one that can sever the head with the fewest strokes and exhibit the least feeling of humanity, is looked upon as the bravest fellow. King Pepple, on describing to me the execution of six prisoners of war, remarked, pointing at his first trade man or mate, as he calls him, "that fellow be big and strong, but he no have strong stomach, he struck four times before he got his man's head off,—I struck only once."

The trunkless heads are placed in a row before the Grand Ju-ju house, and those parts of the body, most concealed in other countries, are nailed to the door posts. The heads placed on their necks with their faces towards the Ju-ju house, present at once, a dreadful and appalling appearance, as of so many men rising from the dead.

After the limbs have been dissevered and the trunks cut into pieces, the entrails being first removed, the whole is put into a large boiler in the Ju-ju house, cooked and distributed amongst the people, the right of choice belonging to the priests, beginning with the chief priest, or Ju-ju of the guana. I walked into the Ju-ju house, where a concourse of people had assembled, and poking my walking stick into the boiling pot, fished out an arm and then a leg. I was very glad, however, to make a quick retreat, sickened and disgusted with so brutal a scene.

The king professes to abhor human flesh, but I have heard him acknowledge that the wrists and ankles were decidedly the best eating. The priests make no profession of squeamishness, but eagerly devour every part except the head, giving preference however to the legs and arms. I have known a priest commit such a debauch on human flesh, as to make himself so ill as to require medicine.

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Some years before I visited Africa, the kings of Bonny and New Calabar were engaged in a protracted war, very much to the injury of trade in both places, and which terminated in the King of Bonny, old Pepple, the present king's father, capturing his majesty, Amacree of Calabar. At

that time, the slave-trade was very briskly carried on in the Bights of Biafra and Benin, and a number of slave ships were there. The king made a great feast in celebration of the victory he had gained, and invited the officers belonging to the several ships. The entertainment was on a grand scale, and his table would not have disgraced an English gentleman for profusion and variety of edibles and wines, but the reader might perhaps find some difficulty in guessing the name of the dish placed before his majesty, at the head of the table. It was the bloody heart of the king of Calabar, just as it had been torn from the body. He took it in his hand and devoured it with the greatest apparent gusto, remarking, "this is the way I serve my enemies."

I had the above account from the present King Pepple, and its truth corroborated by an eye-witness.

From time immemorial, it has been customary at certain periods, to sacrifice one or more human beings as an offering to the god of the bar of the river Bonny, to prevent it filling up, as have several of the rivers of this coast.

On the nineteenth of May, 1840, the object of sacrifice was a little Eboe girl brought from the interior some months before for the purpose,

who had been prepared for it at the house of Ju-ju Jim. This custom has not been practised so much of late as it used to be. The previous consecrations to this god were two little boys from the same country. About noon the king's large war canoe, made out of a solid piece of timber, with upwards of one hundred people in it, passed close to the vessel of which I was then surgeon. The little girl was seated in a chair, and decorated with silks, satins, coral and glass beads, and protected by an awning, made of bamboo mats. The other occupants of the canoe were priests, war-men stationed in the centre, and a few chiefs, the rest were slaves who propelled the canoe. We all might have witnessed the ceremony, and several of us would have done so, but for the heavy rain and the prospect of tornadoes. I had several accounts from eye-witnesses as to the *how* she was disposed of. When they arrived at the bar, the priests made a long palaver to the god, threw a quantity of cloth, rum, &c., into the water, and then pitched in the offering, chair, decorations, and all. She immediately sunk with the weight of the beads, and the canoe pulled off for the town. Had any one had the temerity to murmur or even look back, the war-men would instantly have made him a head shorter.

I knew the little wretch very well. She was a handsome, confident, clever child, about six or seven years of age. I took *chop* with her and her guardian priest a short time before the perpetration of this murder. She possessed and used all the power of a despot, sat at the head of the table, distributed her favours as she thought best, beat and abused any one, and had in reality as much power as a king or a chief. She was allowed to go where and when she liked, had several attendants and anything she saw and wished for, she had but to touch to make her own. People in the market-place might be seen flying in all directions with eggs, yams, fowls, rum, &c, to avoid her touching them.

It is a remarkable coincidence, that on the evening of the day in question, a large ship belonging to Liverpool, worth, with the cargo, from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds, was totally wrecked on the very bar, to the god of which, this child was sacrificed.

A few of the least valuable slaves are always sacrificed in this place, on the death of a gentleman, by chopping them in pieces, but as it is performed by his <sup>own</sup> relatives and head slaves. I rather think it is not so much as an oblation, as under the idea that his death had been caused or

expedited by the practise of sorcery, and so to make sure of the wizard, and to remove suspicion from themselves, they despatch a few people in hopes of not missing the offender.



## CHAPTER IX

### ' OF GOD

**King Pepple praying—Desires to kill God—Wishes to live for ever—Admires Naval and Military heroes—Conversations on religion—Difficulties of Missionaries—Politeness**

ADMITTING the existence of a supreme Being they have a very limited idea of his goodness. I am not certain that I ever knew God addressed in prayer more than once and that was by my friend King Pepple. Calling upon him one morning before he was up, I sat down upon an armoured chest just outside his sleeping-room. Intending to awake him *accidentally*, I whistled a tune and drummed to it with my knuckles upon the empty chest. He soon appeared at the door with nothing on but a small piece of cloth tied round his loins. After shaking hands and enquiring after each other's health, the usual salutations of

the morning, he turned his face towards the sun and stretching out his hands and arms in that direction addressed himself for a few seconds to that object, as I thought, by the silent motion of his lips. Always anxious to get any of them to talk about God and religion, I said "what have you been doing king?"

"All the same as you do,—I tank God "

"For what?"

"Every good ting God send's me."

"Have you seen God?"

"Chu' no—suppose man see God he must die one minute." (He would die in a moment)

"When you die won't you see God?"

With great warmth, "I no savvy. (I don't know How should I know? Never mind I no want to hear more for that palaver" (I want no more talk on that subject)

"What way?" (Why?)

"It no be your business, you come here for trade palaver."

I knew it would be to no use pursuing the subject at that time, so I was silent, and it dropped for the moment

In speaking of him dying I had touched a very tender and disagreeable chord for he looked very savage and sulky, and I saw by the rapid changes

in his countenance that he was the subject of some violent internal emotion. At length he broke out, using most violent gesticulations and exhibiting a most inhuman expression of countenance, "suppose God was here I must kill him one minute!"

"You what? you kill God!" faltered I, quite taken aback and almost breathless with the novel and diabolical notion—"you kill God? why you talk all same fool," (like a fool,) "you cannot kill God, and suppose it possible that God could die, every thing would cease to exist. He is the spirit of the universe. But he can kill you"

"I know I cannot kill him but suppose I could kill him, I would."

"Where does God live."

"For top."

"How?" He pointed to the zenith

"And suppose you could, why would you kill him."

"Because he makes men to die"

"Why my friend," in a conciliating manner, "you would not wish to live for ever, would you?"

"Yes, I want to stand," (remain for ever)

"But you will be old by and by, and if you live long enough, will become very infirm like that old man"—pointing to a man very old for an

African, and thin, and lame, and almost blind, who had come into the court during the foregoing conversation to ask for some favour (I wonder he had not been destroyed)—“and like him you will become lame, and deaf, and blind, and will be able to take no pleasure; would it not be better then for you to die when this takes place and you are in pain and trouble and so make room for your son as your father did for you?” •

“No, it would’nt, I want to stand all same I stand now.”

“But suppose you should go to a place of happiness after death, and”—

“I no savvy nothing about that, I know that I now live, and have too many wives and niggers (slaves) and canoes” (he did not mean what he said in saying he had too many wives &c, it is their way of expressing a great number) “and that I am king and plenty of ships come to my country I know no tother ting, and I want to stand.”

I offered a reply but he would hear no more, and so the conversation on that subject ceased and we proceeded to discuss one not much more agreeable to him—the payment of a very considerable debt which he owed me.

I never, but on two other occasions, had a

lengthy conversation with a native of that part of Africa on God, religion, or a future state, and one of them was also with King Pepple

We had been talking about England and English men and the progress of science in my country and the countries of other white men. He is particularly fond of hearing of the exploits of naval and military heroes. He admires the characters of Buonaparte, Admiral Sir Charles Napier, and Wellington very much, but Nelson is his great favourite. "That Nelson be devil of a strong fellow" he remarked. "Oh no" said I, thinking he alluded to the physical man, "he was not a big man, besides he was blind of an eye and had only one arm" "I no speak for that, but for head palaver, he was a man with a devil of a strong head."—(a man of great talent)

He had asked me about the balloon, steam-engine, diving-bell, magic lantern, phantasmagoria and other interesting things, with respect to most of which he was acquainted with many pleasing facts. I had been trying to explain to him the principles on which they act, and the phenomena take place. This conversation led him to enquire "what way white man first came up," (the origin of man,) a subject which no doubt had often occupied his inquisitive mind

I began with the Mosaic account. I told him of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, of the earth, the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and lastly of Adam and Eve. Of the temptation of our first parents by the serpent, who was the devil, in the garden of Eden, and of their expulsion thence. I told him of Enoch and Mathusalem, the building of the tower of Babel, of Noah, man's wickedness, the ark and the deluge. Of Abraham, Moses, and Daniel in the lion's den, and of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace;—in short a concise epitome of the principal transactions from the creation of the world till the death of Christ. He frequently made remarks, many of which were shrewd and pointed. He wished to know whether Adam and Eve were black or white. I could not inform him, but said I thought they might be neither one nor the other, as the people of Asia, where they were supposed to have been created are brown or copper-coloured. He thought the serpent ought to have been destroyed. I told him that God who is all wisdom as well as all greatness thought otherwise and that it is our business not to yield when he tempts us to do wrong. That man was made to live for ever, and that if he had no temptations in this world to overcome he could not expect

happiness for ever hereafter. He thought Enoch, Daniel and the Hebrew children must have been very good men and that God had been very fond of them. He thought people must have been fools to attempt to build a tower to reach to heaven. He wished he had a few soldiers as strong as Sampson and as skilful as David, for then he would soon settle the war palaver that was distracting his country and ruining trade.

We had a long and serious conversation, and got on very well, till I told him how wicked man became, and lost all favour with God, but that he gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world, that through His merits we might get to heaven, and be eternally happy. He stopped me when describing Christ's sufferings and death, by suddenly exclaiming, "that be d—— lie, no tell me them d—— lie. Do you tink I be boy, or do you tink I be fool, or what do you tink I be? You say God was plenty vext at man for doing worse ting, and then you tell me he go kill him son to please himself! What fool palaver that be? Do you tink 'pose all my niggers do every worse ting, I go kill my son to please myself? no—never,—I can't,—it be d—— fool lie."

I got him pacified, and told him it was the

almost universal belief among white men; and among many black ones too, that had "come up," (become civilized) That the bible said so, and that God had told good men what to put in the bible; that we knew they were good men, because they did every thing that was good, and wrought wonderful miracles, as a proof that their mission was from God, and that their miracles had been seen by thousands of people "Hugh," said he, "I don't know, does he never live for book?" (are lies never written in books.) "When I hear of white man going faster than ~~the~~ wind,—of his going down into the sea like a fish,—of his flying in the air like a bird,—and other ~~strange~~ things, I think he be nearly the same as God, but when you tell me them fool palaver for God's son, I tink white man be fool,—that he pass fool" (worse than a fool) "I tink he be all same s——," (what Saint Paul "counted all things to be to win Christ," but more vulgarly expressed than in our present translation.) •

I tried to impress his majesty with an idea of "the justice of God, as well as of his omnipotence and wisdom, and that nothing would satisfy divine justice but such a sacrifice, but he cut me short by saying, "never mind, let that stand."

I am persuaded that christian missionaries



will often meet with characters like King People. No one can tell the difficulties they must have to contend with, independent of the difficulties of language, in imparting christian instruction to the heathen, but those that have tried In attempting to enlighten a man like him, every inch of ground will have to be contended for. Not one mental admission will he make, till by force of reason and argument his understanding is made to comprehend, and his reason to approve what you advance. A simple verbal admission of the doctrines or facts inculcated, amounts to nothing.

Generally speaking, they will not hear a word at all, and will stop you at once by telling you they do not want to hear that subject discussed, that you did not come there for that purpose, that you had better mind your own business, the attending to which is plenty for you to do, and that you are a clever fellow if you can manage it successfully; that *your* Ju-ju (religion, bible, priests, &c.,) no doubt, suit you and your country very well, as theirs does them and their country, and the like. Or what shews the task to be equally difficult, they will allow you to talk, with the greatest forbearance, never uttering a word, or shewing the least symptoms of impatience till

you have done, when they will very quietly and politely say, "now 'pose you have finish that palaver we had better proceed to business, or play (talk nonsense) or drink tombo" And should you persist in asking questions and should they wish to treat you in the politest manner—which in justice to them I must say they almost invariably do unless you annoy them—they silence you with the everlasting *anenea*—(I don't know )

## CHAPTER X

### KROUMAN

Kroumen—Freemen—<sup>124</sup>A, apprenticeship—Labourers to white men—Dentistry—Dressing and undressing—Fear of slave ships—Written characters—The Grand Devil—God has two eyes—Language

THE Krou country is situated on the Grain Coast commencing on the east side of Liberia, and extending to Cape Palmas. The Grain Coast is supposed to derive its name from what the Dutch call grain, that is, grains of Paradise commonly called by the trade Malagatta pepper, an article the country can supply in abundance. Some geographers have stated that it has its name in consequence of formerly supplying Europeans with cochineal, which was supposed to be a grain instead of an insect. It supplies ivory, cam wood, palm oil, rice, cassavi, bullocks, &c.

The Kroumen or Kroomen are a fine race of people inhabiting the sea-shore, and are morally and physically superior to the inhabitants of the bights. The salubrious character of their country, being less woody and more hilly than higher up the gulph, and their higher social condition, account for their superiority.

They rejoice in the name of freeman, but like the rest of the inhabitants of this country they practise polygamy, and are very anxious to perform a few voyages to earn money to procure two or three extra wives to cultivate rice and cassava, their staple articles of diet. I may observe that their parents generally undertake to find them their first wife. A present of a few European goods or tiger's teeth is always made to the parents of their other wives, not exactly as purchase money but as a bonus or sweetener.

Tiger's teeth are as current on some parts of the Krou coast as sixpences and shillings are in England. Their value arises, I should suppose from the governors of the different states having made laws, that they shall represent a certain amount of property in order that tigers may be pursued for the sake of their teeth, and in this way extirpated.

Traders to various parts of the coast find them

very useful in assisting to work the ship and in boating in the rivers and on coming to anchor in coast trading, that is, running up and down the coast purchasing ivory, gold-dust, tortoise shell, grains of paradise &c. It is customary for a ship of five hundred tons burden to engage a dozen of these men when proceeding to the palm oil rivers.

A singular custom of apprenticeship, peculiar to themselves, prevails among these people. A man who has made a voyage or two, has acquired some knowledge of the English language and of the duties of an ordinary seaman, and in consequence of these acquirements, a name, takes lads under his <sup>charge</sup> protection and recommends them to captains or traders of ships. When they are engaged he receives the first month's pay, and another month's pay when they have performed the voyage. In their turn, these lads becoming headmen, assume a name, build a house and trade, which previous to going to sea they were not allowed to do.

When a ship approaches within ten or fifteen miles of the coast they come off to her. It is very amusing to see them paddle their long narrow canoes with from one to three or four men in each. They are all fishermen, and seldom leave the shore without being provided with fishing tackle. If they have been unsuccessful or have

not had time to arrange and throw out their lines as they came off, they play all sorts of antics, such as shooting across each others bows, capsizing one anothers canoes or filling them with water by catching hold of one end in passing suddenly and tilting them. This causes some delay and enables the most expert to reach the ship first, and so secure the first chance of an engagement. Those of the canoes that have got fish come along-side more soberly, and as they approach the ship remove their lines from their toes, arms, and necks, from which they have been floating. The Kiouman never uses his hands in fishing as they are fully employed in managing his frail bark.

Before embarking, they remove the cloth that encircles their loins, and tie it about their heads like a turban. The loin cloth is resumed as soon as they step on board, which they accomplish very dexterously, by climbing up the chains and being adjusted, they quickly walk aft to shake hands, grinning and showing a most formidable set of teeth. The front ones are sharpened to resemble dog's-teeth. This piece of dentistry, which is done for the purpose of tearing their enemies in battle, is performed with a piece of iron hoop.

On approaching a ship, if a Krouman does not know her, he will rest on his paddle every now and again, and take a good survey, for he dreads falling into the hands of a Spaniard, or Portuguese, for fear of being sold into slavery, but willingly serves a Frenchman, Dutchman, or American. He gives preference, however, to an Englishman. If he find all right, and he always forms a pretty correct opinion from the ensign flying, and the build and rig of the craft, he fearlessly approaches, shouting to his comrades *bat-teo, batteo*, (give way, give way)

Those of them that have been to sea before, produce written characters, of which they are not a little proud, carried in little boxes, formed out of solid pieces of wood, with lids made impervious to water by the use of gum or bees' wax. Their characters or books are sometimes highly amusing documents; and if you were not aware that strange characters are often given out of mere playfulness, you would not think them very creditable to the poor Krouman. Some of them will perhaps run thus.—“This is to certify that Bottle-of-Bear is the biggest scoundrel I ever met with.” “Sir John Tobin is not worth his salt.” “Yellow-Belly is as lazy as a Mahon soldier, and a thief. I white-washed him and

hung him up to dry, but it did him no good.”  
“I do hereby certify that Napoleon Buonaparte, alias gimlet eye, is not worth a row of pins,” &c  
&c

You pick out the biggest and strongest fellows, and a bargain is soon struck—five shillings a month wages, two months’ wages to be paid in advance in English goods. An agreement to land them in their own country again on returning home is always included in the bargain. If any of them have not been to sea before, you christen them after the name of the ship, or owner, or supercargo, or master, or on account of some peculiarity of person, as Nosey, Black-Jack, John Bull, Long Stick, &c, &c. Although these people are so much superior to the rest of the inhabitants residing on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, and may generally be trusted when away from their own country under the protection of white men, their honesty is not to be too far tested at home. After a Krouman has received and handed over his advance to the headman and the nearest relation that accompanies him, to see him embark, in the bustle and confusion attending their shipment, he sometimes gives you the slip, if you do not keep a sharp look out, by stepping over the side, and pulling away for the shore.



When a Krouman has made up his mind to go to sea, he propitiates the *Grand-Devil* for a safe and prosperous voyage, by leaving at the mouth of a cave, a few little articles, as a fathom of cloth, a bottle of rum and a head or two of unmanufactured tobacco. As soon as he gets out of sight of the cave, the Grand-Devil comes out, takes the things and instantly retires.

On trying to convince an intelligent Krouman of the absurdity of the Grand-Devil wanting rum, tobacco, &c., and of its being a trick of the priest, he assured me he did so, and mentioned a circumstance in confirmation that took place in his village.

Some years before he was born, a Krouman, intending to go to sea, left his little present for the devil, but having a desire to see him, he slyly secreted himself in the neighbourhood of the cave, to watch for his coming. He did come, and in his displeasure at being watched miraculously converted the poor inquisitive Krouman into a tree, and the tree is standing there at this day, as a monument of the Grand Devil's displeasure at inquisitive people. Nothing would convince him that it was the priest, who had, perhaps, committed murder to screen himself from an exposure of his nefarious practices. His only

reply to my remarks, was, "I have seen the tree myself—I know what I tell you to be true." We had some further conversation about the Grand-Devil, during which, I told him I was surprised that he should pay so much attention to the devil, who was the author of all evil, and elicited from him, that it was God whom he wished to propitiate, and that God and the devil are one. "It is very strange," I said, "that your God should live below, while white man's God lives in heaven above." "True," he replied, "my God lives above too." "How can that be, can God live in two places at one time?" "Yes God has two eyes, one eye lives in every place that is light, the other in every place that is dark." A pretty good notion this, of the omnipresence of the Deity—that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place."

The Krou language seems to be composed of vowels only. They end every attempt to pronounce an English word with o, for instance, for captain, doctor, mate, boat bucket, &c, they say cap-a-io, dotto-io, mase-io, boas-io, buckes-io, &c. By singing extemporaneous songs, when at work, they communicate intelligence of any transaction on board, which is echoed from the nearest ship to the next, so that hardly a circum-

stance regarding trade, or any other matter, can transpire, but all become acquainted with it. Like the inhabitants of the bights, they are no tattlers, a glass of grog, however, or a scarlet nightcap, is sometimes too strong a temptation to be resisted, and you may become acquainted with things of consequence that are going forward, by making such a gift.

I am not aware of the Kroumen being cannibals, or of their practising those horrid religious rites, common to other tribes.

Great hopes are entertained of the reception of christianity, generally, by this people. May the day soon arrive, when in the spirit of the prophet of old, they can say, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace."

## CHAPTER XI

### ORDEAL

**Trial by Ordeal—Saucy water—Scene in a police court—  
Raising the wind—Missionaries—Tattooing—Davidawea**

**TRIAL** by ordeal called *Judicium Deo* or God's judgment, is certainly of very remote antiquity, and has been common to almost every nation in the world. The first account we have of this trial in Europe, is in about 700, and comprises part of the laws of King Ina. Grotius gives instances of its being resorted to in Sardinia and Bithynia, and other places. Among the Greeks, five or six hundred years before the Christian era, a person suspected of a crime, declared himself ready to handle hot iron, and walk over fire to prove his innocence. It was common among the Hindoos, and was conducted in a variety of ways as by fire, poison, water, idols &c. The fire

ordeal probably originated with the ancient Persians, as fire was worshipped as an emblem of the Deity. It was probably first appointed by God, as certainly the first mention we have of it, is in the Pentateuch "And he shall cause the woman to drink bitter water that causeth the curse, and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter . And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell," &c

Among the Kroumen, this mode of trial is considered infallible in detecting and punishing crime, and that by bitter water, or saucy water, as they call it, is resorted to, but as it is not so many years since similar barbarities were practised on witches in England, we need not wonder at it. The judicial decision by image is in common use in the neighbourhood of the river Congo

If a Krouman be suspected of robbing a fellow or doing him an injury by witchcraft, or otherwise, he is made to swallow saucy water, a poisonous infusion. If he die, he is considered guilty, if he survive its effects, innocent For-

fortunately for the real or supposed culprit, the saucy water often acts as an emetic, and he is saved.

Many of these men are strong resolute fellows, and in what they consider to be a right cause, show great determination of character. One of them fell into bad company in Liverpool and had his money and part of his clothes filched from him. Having made himself somewhat acquainted with the town and its judicial regulations during his short residence, he seized the culprit, and in spite of great opposition from herself and companions dragged her to the police court during its sitting and laid his case before the presiding magistrate. He would have had some difficulty in making himself understood but for a gentleman who had been in Africa and understood his patoise, happening to be in court, undertaking to act as interpreter. His description of meeting with the girl, her polite invitation to accompany her home, and the transactions there, all expressed with great simplicity and particularly in the very coarsest sailor's slang, and without the slightest idea of indelicacy, created no small degree of merriment in the court.

An incident occurred during one of my passages to Africa that gave the Kroumen no small

degree of pleasure and confidence in their Ju-ju palaver

A number of them had been brought to England the previous voyage on account of some difficulty in landing them at their own country and were taken back by us. We had been a long time becalmed off Saint Ann's shoals near Sierra Leon, and during that period had drifted a degree to the Northward. The time began to pass very irksomely to us all, and none felt the delay more keenly than the poor Kioumen who had been twice the time from their own country they anticipated when they joined the ship. They would withdraw from the rest of the ship's company by one's and two's to a retired part of the ship and chant or sing extemporaneous songs in a low wailing tone, for hours together, about their country, and mothers, and wives, and children.

On the twenty first day the captain ordered the steward to give them a bottle of rum to make Ju-ju for a fair wind. The headman or boatswain began the play by pouring out a wine-glass full, and after just tasting it poured the rest overboard to the westward, the direction whence he wished the wind to come, and addressed himself in supplication to the Grand-Devil for a fair wind. The rest did the same and in half an hour a delightful

breeze sprung up and wafted us without further delay to Cape Palmas, their home. It ought to be mentioned that previous to ordering the rum, the captain had observed a slight rippling of the water in the distance, occasioned by a gentle zephyr just breathing over it, indicating an approaching breeze. The Kroumen took to themselves the credit of raising the wind, and doubtless to this day believe in the efficacy of their application to the "Grand-Devil".

There are several christian missionaries from the United States of America on the Krou Coast and there were three at Cape Palmas some years ago. Two of these gentlemen were respectively of the catholic and methodist churches, and I think the other was either a protestant episcopalian, or baptist. I enquired of Mr. Rushwern, the American agent, a respectable and intelligent gentleman, what the missionaries were doing. "Why," said he, "so many christian sects puzzle the poor blacks, though they have done some good among them. The catholic priest tells them on no account to go to the protestant episcopalian, or methodist chapel, as the worship is heretical, and two protestant ministers caution them to avoid the papist chapel as the respect paid to pictures and images is idolatry &c."



These different methods of teaching christianity to the heathen is enough to almost neutralize the good they might otherwise do by so embarrassing them that they hardly know what to do or to believe

In the methodist and the catholic chapels the largest congregations collect, the one pleases with singing and the other with pictures

How much it is to be regretted that christian party spirit should be carried amongst heathens Little good can be expected to be done, so long as the ministers of each particular sect continue to preach up the peculiar dogmas of their own church, and backbite their neighbours instead of inculcating the simple and pure doctrines of christianity

The Krouman is distinguished from all other African tribes by his tattooing A narrow strip is tattooed with a sailor's knife and wet gunpowder, from the top of the forehead to the tip of the nose, and a broad arrow near each ear

I have greater pleasure in speaking of this people than of any other tribe I have met with They are the least roguish, most laborious, and altogether the best disposed I shall ever feel grateful for a poor Krouman's kind and unremitting attention to me—not servile attention—

when labouring under a severe attack of climatorial fever, and its debilitating consequences. But for *Davidawea* I should not have been alive to pen these remarks about him and his countrymen. He was devoured by a shark while fishing in his own country.

## CHAPTER XII.

### MYTHS

**Of Myths—Black and white men—A mafouka-mahanga man at breakfast—Cockerapeak—Neighbourhood of Congo—Trial by idol ordeal—Superstition about a bell—Slave trade—Ivory trade—Murdering slaves—The zebu**

EVERY country has its myths. The mind of man, unacquainted with divine revelation, and thirsting after knowledge and the marvellous, has ever been prone to invent myths, accounting for the origin of the world, of man, and the variety of his species.

The chief exportations from the south-west coast of Africa, in the neighbourhood of the river Congo, are slaves, ivory, gum copal and bees' wax. The contraband trade is carried on by Spaniards, Portuguese, and Brazilians, the legitimate trade, chiefly by Englishmen.

At the factory of an English trader, a mafouka, -machanga-man, a superior order of magistrate, joined us at the breakfast table, of whom I learnt how the cock fell into sad disgrace, by occasioning one half of the inhabitants of the world to be black, while the other half is white.

The conversation on this subject was in substance as follows. "What will you take mafouka machanga, here's fish, fowl and goat, cassavi and bread, sweet tombo, coffee and rum and water." "Part a part," (a little of each,) 'but what kind of fowl that a be, a cock or a hen?"

"I don't know, it makes no matter I suppose."

Oh but it makes a great deal of matter,—if he be a cock, I cannot eat him.'

"Why so?"

"Because them cock be d—— rascal."

"How is this,—what harm has he done you?"

"A great deal of harm, the rascal, had it not been for him, I should have been white man, all same yourself."

"What has the cock to do with your being a black man?"

"Every ting."

"Come tell us all about it."

"Well, I must. You see, when God Almigh-

the first made man, he had only one day to make *them* in. He began early one morning, and worked hard all day, very hard, for he wanted to make a great many. When it was close for night, he ordered them all to stand up in a row, that he might see how they looked. Well, he examined them all over, and thought they would do very well, as far as shape went, but he had made them all *black*, and he thought they would look better if they were *white*, so he turned to to white-wash them, and white-washed very hard all night that he might get them finished before the time he was limited to had expired. Well, when he had got just half through his work, the cock crew, and it was morning, so he was obliged to leave the rest unwhite-washed. If it had not been for him, God would have finished them, and every man would be white. This is the reason why one half of the world be white men, and the other half black men, and why I cannot eat them d—— rascal that would not wait till God had finished!"

Early morn is expressed all over this coast by cockerapeak, "(the cock speaks,) and it is the hour of rising.

The mafouka-machanga cooled his ire with half a tumbler of raw rum, and the cook being

sent for, who assured us it was a hen, he made a hearty breakfast on fowl and the other good things without more ado

This is one of the most healthy parts of Africa within the tropics. Food of almost every description, is very plentiful. The natives supply the white man's table three times a day with fish, for about four shillings a month. Fine fowls may be bought for five pence a dozen, and large ducks, of the Muscovy breed, for seven pence a dozen. Pigs, goats, Indian corn, calavances and cassavi, are equally cheap. Sweet tombo taken from the tree every morning, you may have on the same terms as fish. Crayfish is abundant, and oysters are plentiful, and as wages are very low, the trader can keep a respectable retinue at a trifling expense, indeed, according to the laws of the country, a European trader is obliged to keep a large retinue. Every factory has engaged in it altogether, some seventeen or eighteen men and boys, who assist in effecting bargains and paying goods, carry their master about in a palanquin, cook and look after the poultry, goats, pigs, &c. More men are palmed upon the trader than are required, but he is obliged to submit to a custom which provides them with employment, and prepares the most

intelligent to transact business for their parents or masters

Being surrounded by so many idle fellows, all thieves, the trader, keep the best look out he can, is liable to be robbed, and it is no small part of his duty to keep a watchful eye upon them

A less formidable mode of trial by ordeal is here resorted to for the recovery of stolen property, and the detection of persons guilty of other breaches of social order, than that by "saucy water," as practised by the Kioumen

If anything of importance be missing, information is communicated to a mafouka-machangaman who brings a priest with a wooden idol with him to the factory. The idol, which resembles nothing that I, or I suppose any body ever saw, is, however, held sacred, and that is sufficient to command respect. The sixteen or eighteen persons are collected near the factory door, and after an address, every man is ordered to drive a nail into it. If any refuse to obey this awful mandate, they are allowed till next day to think of the matter. During the succeeding night, the stolen property is almost sure to be left in some convenient place, where it will be found. After this, each man hammers

in his nail, with the greatest confidence, being assured of exemption from punishment by the fetish or Ju-ju

This treatment is as humane as weighing a witch against a church bible, as practised in England, a century or two ago. An equally humane method of recovering stolen property is also resorted to in the Bonny

The late King Popple had a large bell, of the dimensions of an ordinary village church bell, which he had hung outside a Ju-ju house, but the beam to which it was suspended giving way, it fell, and has remained there ever since half buried in the ground. Some very superstitious notions are held respecting this bell. One is, that if it were hung again, and rung, old King Popple would rise from the dead!

This bell is used as a sanctuary, and many a poor fellow resorts thither on being suspected of witchcraft, commonly called "poisoning for eye"—causing death by an evil eye,—and of other offences, and remains till suspicion has been removed from him, or a compromise made with the priests

I recollect once on a ship's colours being stolen, application was made to the king and chiefs to try to get them back again, but without suc-



cess. A fee was given to the priests, and then men promenaded about the different towns, blowing on elephants' tusks, and a proclamation was issued to the effect, that if the stolen colours were not left at the bell, the most dreadful calamity would overtake the thief, and giving notice that if any one watched the bell, to attempt to discover the thief, the like calamity would befall him. The desired effect was produced, for the colours were left there during the night, and were returned to the ship.

The slave-trade with all its barbarities at home and in transit has been carried on to a great extent on this coast. The slave ships have been so narrowly watched by French and English men of war that every expedient has been resorted to, to effect a rapid shipment of slaves. A system of telegraph has been adopted and is kept up on the coast to inform the captains of slavers at sea, as soon as they come near enough to bring their powerful spy-glasses to bear upon them, if slaves be ready for embarkation and if the coast be clear. In one little harbour I counted upwards of a hundred flat bottomed canoes, each capable of carrying five or six men. When an expected slaver heaves in sight, the slaves are hurried from the barracoons in the bush into these canoes and

pulled along-side the slaver, without her ever coming to anchor but simply backing her yards.

They don't take time to pass the slaves up the gangway ladder but whip them up. This piece of manipulation is performed by letting fall a rope through a block at the yard arm, and on its reaching the canoc, a man passes a running noose round the body of the slave who is hauled up, and pulled on-board by a guy.

A slave-dealer carries on the ivory trade at the same time, indeed ivory dealing is his ostensible business, when he has a factory near the beach, and subject to the surveillance of the English and French war ships. Sometimes a number of factories have been burned on suspicion. Some of the tusks are very heavy. I had one of a pair that would weigh two hundred and ninety odd pounds. Teeth running any thing like this size, require two men to carry them. A medium sized tooth of from thirty to sixty, or seventy pounds weight is a burthen for an ordinary man.

The cruelty exercised by their black masters exceeds all credibility. After a long march over the country, the slaves are often so emaciated as to be unfit for the white purchaser, and "making them up for sale" would be more troublesome and expensive, cheap as provisions are, than pur-

chasing others. To set them at liberty would endanger the safety of the persons and property of their new masters. An ivory trader took me to a place an hour's walk from the shore, where were the skeletons, bleached white with the sun, of several hundreds of these unhappy creatures whose throats had been cut, and their carcasses left to be devoured by the jackall, an animal in which this place abounds. Had I not been informed of this fact by persons whose veracity I could not doubt, and had I not personally inspected the murderous and sarcophagous spot, well as I am acquainted with the demoniacal character of the black man, I should have some difficulty in giving credence to so revolting a narrative.

Near to this spot as if the very ground on which such unheard of barbarities had been committed were cursed with a heavier malediction than the rest of the world, I saw a dead snake which I believe had not at that time been described by naturalists, called by the natives the Zeba. It was black, and in dimensions about eighteen inches long, and as thick as an ordinary walking stick. This reptile is endowed with the faculty of ejecting from its mouth to the distance of several feet, a poison of so deadly and escharotic a quality that it is said in the event of its falling

upon any animal, even where there is no abstraction of the skin, death quickly ensues.

The successful native slave-dealers often acquire great wealth which they are always happy to display to Europeans. I dined with a small party at the house of a mafouka machanga-man, who made a princely display of plate. Dishes, covers, plates, goblets—all were of solid silver and must have cost an immense sum of money, and I saw sufficient to accommodate a large party in the same elegant manner. Some of the slave-dealers are said to have dinner services of solid gold.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOUSES

Dwellings of Bosjesmans—Houses in Fernando Po—House building on the Continent—Houses on Grain Coast—Use made of furniture—Fire—Scorpion—Centapede—Boas

THE erratic Bosjesman builds little or no house but burrows in the ground or hides in caves and rocks, or among the branches of leaves, shrubs, and trees, from whence their name

The Booby, the timid, harmless inhabitant of the island of Fernando Po, erects a small shed with sticks and leaves of trees and leaving it open at the sides, dwells in security. On the continent the houses of the settled inhabitants are more securely built of wattle and daub

When about to erect a house, a chief collects all his family and slaves, and those connected

with his house by relationship , and on the ground being marked out, he divides them into several companies being well aware that by division of labour, he can accomplish his object with greater dispatch. One company is sent into the bush to cut stakes, another sharpens and drives them into the ground, other companies wind the stakes with withes(wattles), preparerats for the roof, mats of leaves for thatching, fill up the interspaces of the wattle work with clay (dab), others prepare doors out of old armour chests, and as scores and hundreds of people are employed a house is frequently knocked up in one day, but two or three is seldom exceeded in bringing the work to completion. The floor is of mud trampled till it becomes hard and firm.

The small houses are divided into three apartments, one is a kind of sitting room, another serves for kitchen, and the other is dedicated to the Ju-ju or gods. But a great chief builds a house with several apartments and courts. A room is always set apart for washing his person in, and has an elevated floor made of strong rafts with plenty of space to allow the water used in washing to run off.

The entrances from the courts to the rooms have thresholds extending a few feet outside each

room made of the same material as the floor with the outside edges supported by stakes. Over these project the roofs of the house which form agreeable shades from the sun and shelter from the rain. The gentleman usually sits on these thresholds and here receives company. Stakes similar to those forming the breastwork of this threshold, driven close together, separates one room from another.

A superstitious notion holds that if one were to pass a threshold while another is sitting or resting his foot upon it, the person so resting would soon be attacked with some illness.

These houses have no chimneys, the doorways answer the purpose of both windows and chimneys, as well as for the ingress and egress of the inmates. The women are not allowed to enter the apartments of the gentlemen unless by special invitation, neither are they allowed to eat with them. Their children however sometimes do. The woman being as guilty of pilfering as the slaves, the chief every day serves out sufficient yams, rice or cassavi, as the case may be, for his household, and occasionally presents his women with a few mamillas to buy dried fish, sweet palm oil, salt and other condiments to eat to their vegetable diet, and to purchase a little tombo. Water.

is the ordinary beverage of the women and slaves. I need scarcely add that tea, coffee and cocoa are luxuries, with the taste of which they are totally unacquainted. Their houses are very scantily furnished. A very rude table made out of the boards of a gun chest, and a log of wood or a few beach wood chairs brought from England, constitute the furniture of the sitting room, and an iron pot and a wooden bowl, that of the kitchen. From the custom of sitting on their hams but little furniture is required. In this position round a wooden bowl placed on the floor they generally take their victuals.

A house on the Grain Coast exactly resembles a sugar loaf in form, and consists of one room only. A native ivory trader, a man of some consequence, invited me to his establishment. It consisted of fourteen houses, thirteen forming a circle with a space of a few yards between each house, and one in the centre. "I have thirteen wives" he remarked "who have each a separate house, and I have this house in the centre to myself. I spend a month with each without creating jealousy, they just last me a year and then I take them over again. Rather luxurious this!"

The great men have abundance of elegant European furniture, such as mirrors, sofas, easy



chairs &c but they have no idea of making common use of it, or of displaying it to advantage I have seen hundreds of pounds worth of valuable furniture huddled together in a large room, and there left to spoil or rot To be possessed of things not within the reach of his less wealthy countrymen is sufficient to gratify the black gentleman's vanity, to use them as conveniences or luxuries seems never to enter his thoughts Considering the use made of their finery it is surprising with what avidity they buy up any thing new and uncommon One of the first questions connected with trade which a black merchant asks you is ' what *best* ting you have this voyage ' If you mention the ordinary articles of commerce he replies " all them be very good ting, but *what very best fine ting* you have," alluding to such articles as I have mentioned and barrel organs, those piano-forte looking things performed on by peripatetic German musicians, and musical boxes, gold and silver cloth, damask table covers, coral, &c. If he can ascertain that you have much of this kind of article, he will probably purchase none of it, but if he finds that you have only a moderate quantity he is anxious to get it all Packed up in boxes or stowed away in a lumber-room, or buried in the ground, the

perishable part of these things is soon destroyed by the myriads of insects that always abound in tropical climates.

Feather or hair beds they have none. The chief and his wife for the time being, sleep in the sitting-room on a grass mat, without covering, and with their feet to the wood embers. The slaves, huddled together as thick as they can lay, heads and tails, like as many pigs, need neither covering nor fire. So many pent up in one room, without window and with closed door, create a heat and stench enough to stifle a European. I have been very glad to withdraw my head, incautiously introduced into one of these pestiferous dormitories.

Houses put together with such combustible materials, as may be expected, are often burnt to the ground. If a house, to windward of a town, take fire, the whole town is almost certain to be destroyed. Light portable goods are so arranged that they can be quickly removed into the bush in case of a fire breaking out, which is scarcely looked upon as a calamity, but when destroying old houses, as Ju-ju or something sacred. I have heard chiefs, although losers by it, express themselves to this effect, and no doubt it is in consideration of the poisonous reptiles,

rats and insects that are destroyed by the devouring element After a house has stood but a very few years, it becomes infested with snakes, scorpions, centapedes, and myriads of small, harmless lizards and insects, that get into trunks and destroy silks, cottons, and almost every thing before them. No wonder that fire when destroying a town should be looked upon as Ju-ju, when the thatch and sides of the houses swarm with these dangerous and troublesome creatures Old houses harbour reptiles to such an extent, that they are frequently seen hanging from the rafters directly over your head. I have felt any thing but comfortable when sitting below a speckled monster,\* swinging within a few feet of my head. ●

I recollect once standing with my back to a wall or partition, in New Calabar, in a gentleman's house, in conference with the master, when he suddenly but quietly said, "Alaboo, boo"—(come hither, captain) I walked towards him, when he arose from his seat to meet me, laid his hands on my shoulders, and gently turning me round, pointed to a large scorpion that had been within a few inches of my neck. In a few seconds more, it would, doubtless, have been down upon me, or had my black friend precipitately

informed me of my close proximity to a poisonous reptile, in the flurry I might have touched it, and have received a severe sting. I placed a piece of stick on the middle of its back, when it quickly stung itself to death.

Another time, when about to retire to rest for the night, I found a centapede had taken possession of my cot. It had come on board among some mats that I had purchased, to make a covering for the ship. Never after this did I retire, without examining my bedding. The bite of the centapede is not considered dangerous to life, but it creates a good deal of febrile action, and often leaves troublesome ulcers. The sting of the scorpion is a more formidable affair, though seldom fatal.

Sometimes very large boas are seen in the towns. One old fellow, that cannot be much less than a hundred feet in length, and is as thick as a small barrel, comes into Bonny to feed. It is not Ju-ju there, but is to a neighbouring people, the Brass, with whom the inhabitants of Bonny are on friendly terms, so it is not allowed to be destroyed. After swallowing a goat or a few fowls, and laying dormant a day or two, it retires into the bush. This monster is a great curiosity even in Africa. Hundreds of people

collect to see it when it visits them, and when boys annoy it with missiles, it rears its head fifteen or twenty feet high, and hissing as if about to pounce upon them, presents a dreadful appearance. If this superstitious people would only allow the monster to be captured, what a valuable prize it would be for one of our zoological gardens.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### COOKING

Coast of the Bights unproductive—Food—Eat elephants, alligators, &c.—Cooking—Distributing elephant's flesh—Climbing cocoa nut trees—A chief and priest eating forbidden meat—Chiefs and slaves eating on board ship—Long-stick at luncheon.

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THE inhabitants of some parts of this coast as the New Calabar and Bonny, live entirely on the profits of trade, the character of the country precluding the possibility of cultivating yams, Indian corn, rice or cassava, the principal articles of diet, to any great extent, and their indolence being so great, that if they can procure just sufficient food to satisfy the cravings of nature, they will not work; hence there are laws prohibiting the cultivation of the little spots of ground available for the production of these articles.

If from any cause the trade of the rivers allu-

ded to, should be interrupted, the most calamitous events would follow. The most intelligent of these people are fully aware of this, and I have heard them remark "'pose no ship come here for three moons, no man savvy what place to get chop (food); one man must kill tother man to eat, one man must kill him father, one father must kill him boy" (child) (All children and slaves are called boys) And to retire into the interior, would be to throw themselves into the hands of people who would make them every one slaves

To their dependence on trade for procuring the necessaries of life, is owing in a great measure, the safety of the white trader. The profits of trade are sufficient to procure all the necessaries of life, and many of its comforts.

The gentleman is almost as luxurious in his eating and drinking as in his intercourse with women. Although he possesses ample means of procuring fish, fowl, goats, and sometimes deer, he does not despise the flesh of the elephant, the tortoise, and alligator. The young tortoise and alligator are not bad food, and taste not unlike turtle. The slave, with his one meal of vegetables a day, devours anything that comes to hand, monkeys, snakes, cats, dogs, maggots, &c, find a receptacle in his capacious maw

During the several years I was in Africa, I scarcely met with a European that did not like the mode of cooking at the houses of the gentlemen, and hardly a day passed that I did not eat with them, taking care to pay my visits to the most cleanly and refined, and those best acquainted with European customs in these matters, at the breakfast or dinner hours. If a black gentleman knows of your intention to visit him at meal time, he provides accordingly, to do honour to his guest, and it is amusing to see the English fashion aped in preparing food, and placing it on the table. An English housewife would be shocked to see a fowl dished up with the legs and wings twisted across the breast, and mashed yam served up in a vessel,—clean, however,—seldom used below stairs. \*

Boiling is the culinary process usually adopted in cooking everything. Some of the dishes are really excellent, but made by far too hot with cayenne, till reconciled by use for the English palate.

The English epicure will hardly know what to think of cooking the following articles, all together—fish, fresh and dried, oysters, clams, cockles, and shrimps, fowl, goat, and perhaps deer; salt-beef or pork, begged from a ship; yams and



plantains, palm oil, salt and green Chili pods, just taken from the tree, and containing all their strength, by the handful. It is however excellent. Many a time have I sat down to dinner without the least appetite, and acquired one by eating. Fresh and smoked fish is served up on one dish, fowl on another, and so on. A bowl of the liquid these things have been boiled in, (soup,) along with a plate, knife, and spoon, and sometimes a fork, are placed before every guest. Shrimps dried and smoked beat into a fine powder in a wooden pestle and mortar, and mixed with a little mashed yam to give consistency to the mass is made into little balls and put into the soup. This dish is decidedly the greatest gastronomic treat I had in Africa, or perhaps ever had elsewhere; such at any rate was the impression at the time. Your tombo glass is always filled up by one of the attendants the moment it is emptied, the warm and savoury nature of the dish calling for a frequent replenishment. After you have sat down to table, but before you begin to eat, a slave holds a basin of water for you to wash your hands, another holds a piece of soap, and a third a towel. The same ceremony is performed after you have done eating.

A dinner similar to the one here described is

not eaten every day. On ordinary occasions the gentleman confines himself to soup and two or three more of the things I have mentioned, which are invariably cooked together; and he dispenses with the use of plate, knife, fork and spoon. Soup is not eaten alone but with the other dishes. Every thing is so well stewed that a knife is not necessary, and a substitute is found for a spoon in preparing the mashed yam for being swallowed. He rolls a piece of yam as big as he can swallow, in the palm of his hand into a ball, and making a deep impression in it with his thumb, dips it into the soup and gets a table-spoonful with every mouthful of yam.

When an elephant is shot, all available hands being mustered, it is dragged into the town, a few men going first with axes and hatchets to clear a way, and it is then cut up and distributed among the king and chiefs. The king having the first choice of parts, selects the proboscis. It is cut cross-wise into junks and skinned inside and out and well boiled, and were it not the custom to keep it till it begins to smell it would be excellent food, much resembling tongue. These people like fish very fresh, the Kroumen keep it till it stinks. The priests claim the head, which is certainly the most valuable part of the animal.

on account of the tusks. The other parts are distributed to the chiefs according to their rank, that is, according to their wealth. The flesh of this animal is soft and flabby, and exceedingly tough, and in fibre resembles veal. Should the elephant be a female in calf, the calf is eaten also, if it have attained any considerable size.

Cocoa-nuts taken out of the shell and placed on the fire become soft and are eaten as bread. They are too valuable an article of diet to be gathered when young for the sake of the milk. I have sometimes begged or bought them on the tree and sent a negro up to twist them off. It is astonishing with what rapidity and safety a Krouman can climb the cocoa-nut tree. He ties a rope round himself and the tree, and placing the soles of his feet against the trunk hitches himself up: the trees often standing at an angle of seventy-five or eighty degrees, renders the task less difficult of accomplishment than one would imagine. When the milk of the cocoa-nut is wanted, a piece of the husk is cut off the apex, and a small piece chopped out of the shell with an angular part of a hatchet. The nut is then taken in both hands, and the liquid drunk out of the vessel in which it was formed.

Eggs and milk are Ju-ju to the slaves and are

not allowed to be eaten by them, they do not scruple however to bring them to the shipping for sale. This law has been instituted for a wise purpose. If the slaves were allowed to eat eggs, there would soon be no hens to lay them. For an analogous reason the use of milk is prohibited.

On running down the coast it is customary to purchase bullocks at the Grain or Gold coast, and turn them on shore to graze on the banks of the oil rivers, the king being answerable for them, for which he receives a good joint of every beast that is slaughtered. This animal is also Ju-ju to all but the king, or there would be danger of its being stolen.

An old chief dining with me when we had fresh beef to dinner, I assisted him to some. When he had nearly finished dinner I said "how do you like the *fresh beef* Jack."

"Dis a be *fresh* beef"

"Yes".

"Then I can't eat him"

"Why, you old sinner, you know as well as I do that it is fresh beef."

"How should I know?" if you had said nothing about it, I should have known nothing about it.

He knew well enough what he had been eating,

and no doubt why it was Ju-ju, but made a kind of compromise with his conscience on the score of not having been informed. "If ignorance be bliss, 'tis folly to be wise"

Palm oil, their principal condiment, is used as we use butter and enters into the composition of every dish. When fresh and sweet, it is decidedly preferable to butter, and easier of digestion.

When a chief dines on board ship he always introduces two or three of his head slaves into the cabin or on the quarter deck, one of whom holds his snuff-box, and another his phylactere or amulet, and sit on the deck near him and eat what he leaves. A chief always eats moderately but will take as much victuals as you choose to heap upon his plate. When the head slaves have satisfied their appetite they hand the plate to the miserable niggers on deck that pull the canoe, who eat up every vestige of what remains, bones and all. I have seen them cranch up large beef bones that would almost frighten a dog to look at. Leg bones are too hard for them, but they never turn away the softer ones. Raw salt beef and pork are eaten with avidity. I recollect once being on board of a neighbouring ship when an inferior, but not the lowest order of slaves, brought some goods for sale. As is usual with

them, he begged hard for a dash or present and was presented, in accordance with an old custom, with some trifling thing but was not satisfied. He tried hard to get an order on the steward for something to eat, and eventually became so annoying that the supercargo said in jest "now Long-stick" (he was a very tall thin fellow) "you shall have a piece of raw beef if you will eat it,) a piece of beef when first cut up weighs eight pounds) which was no sooner said than agreed to, and he insisted upon the proposition being fulfilled, so a piece was immediately ordered out of the harness-cask, fresh from the pickle. In an incredible short space of time he eat it every morsel with a proportionate quantity of bread, and drank a bottle of raw rum, and then asked to have the doze repeated.

You may always know if a slave has lately dined by his appearance, provided he has had as much as he could eat. If he asks for food and you say "oh you have dined" he lays his hand upon his stomach and says, „offourie, (no) look at my belly."

## CHAPTER XV

### DRESS

**Cold felt in rainy season—Ornamenting in Fernando Po—  
Dress of boys, women and men on the Continent—Gala  
days—Pastime of women—Dancing—The busile.**

IN a climate where Fahrenheit's Thermometer often indicates one hundred and thirty degrees of heat, and seldom falls below eighty, little clothing is required and with the exception of a loin-cloth, none, ordinarily, is worn.

Slaves proceeding to the interior during the rainy seasons on the errand of exchanging European for African goods, and returning, notwithstanding their canoes are sheltered from the rain by mat awnings, and at one or both ends of the canoe a hearth of sand is raised on which a fire is constantly kept burning, the moist state of the atmosphere causes the animal heat to be

rapidly thrown from the surface of the body, and occasions them to suffer from cold

The use of clothes is entirely dispensed with by the inhabitants of Fernando Po from earliest infancy even to decrepit old age, unless a hat the size and shape of a dinner plate fastened to the crown by a wooden skewer stuck into the hair, and a few strips of the green intestine of the goat tied round his loins, entitle the Booby to the appellation of a dressing animal. With these decorations and two or three pounds of yellow clay plastered into the hair on the back part of his head, resembling so many pounds of candles depending, a penny Dutch knife or a piece of harpened iron hoop stuck within a piece of grass twine tied midway between the shoulder and the elbow, his fore-arms and legs encircled with threaded little spangles found in the soil of his volcanic mountain home, and with a calabash for holding water slung round his neck and an asagai in his hand, he struts about with all the dignity of a prince or of a peacock.

On the neighbouring continent children of both sexes, and young women till they are married or till the commencement of a period in life indicative of womanhood, untrammelled and unconscious of the least impropriety, walk about in a



state of nudity Boys about seven or eight years of age begin to wear a small triangular piece of printed cotton cloth round the loins For a girl of this age to wear a cloth would indicate either some feminine impropriety or that she had been the subject of violence.

The first article of dress worn by a female is a coarse cotton cloth of native growth and manufacture, four inches broad, and from two to three yards long.—I sincerely wish it had fallen to the lot of a lady to describe the dress of her sex for I feel as much bothered as lord Byron did with pins when acting the part of a lady's maid, and I wish I may not prick my fingers, but there is not much probability of a lady visiting this golgotha at present unless some missionary's wife accompanies her husband. In such an event she would not remain long in life. Living a few days on shore is considered, and justly, more dangerous to health than for a healthy country person to reside for the same period in a typhus fever ward. Europeans sleep on board ship.—Well, this narrow strip of cloth is tied about the body just above the hips and brought from behind between the legs, the end being passed under the part that encircles her, hangs down in front This

cloth continues to be worn after marriage, tied in front in large knots, and over it a blue cotton cloth, called blue baft, reaching nearly down to the knees. The dress of the married women gives them any thing than a pleasing or graceful appearance; the large knots of the under-cloth make them look as if a large substance, as a cocoa-nut in the husk was concealed beneath it. Women further in the interior wear nothing but a belt, three or four inches broad, with an open fringe a foot long, tied round their bodies.

On Grand Ju-ju and other gala days, men and women are decked out in all their finery. Sir John Falstaff's regiment marching through Coventry could not present a more motley appearance. Gold cloth, silver cloth, and damask table-covers, blue, red, green, and yellow hats, umbrellas of every colour, and party-coloured—every section of the umbrageous part being of a different colour—are called into requisition. One man's entire dress including his loin-cloth, consists of a handsome coat with gold epaulettes; another's of a regimental cocked hat; others a sailor's hat, or monkey jacket, a waistcoat or a pair of trowsers with the slops tied round the neck; another a long cavalry sword dragging after him, and a red nightcap to cover his cra-

nium; and all that can command them, long strings of coral or glass beads

The men take to their canoes, and pull about the river. "The mirth and fun grow fast and furious."—Large guns are fired, drums beat, elephant's tusks blown into, demijons struck, speaking-trumpets eight feet long halloo'd through—in short, the sight, din, and bustle is as exciting to themselves, and amusing to us as can well be conceived, and quite beyond my power to describe. Every ship is paddled round and visited in its turn, the captains and officers of the canoes vociferating through speaking-trumpets, with stentorian voices, "arradoga, arradoga,"—give way, give way. Something to "make play," is expected from each ship; beef, pork, bread, and above all rum is eagerly but politely demanded, to be consumed on shore after the amusement and fatigue of the day

Meanwhile, the women on shore are not idle. The former part of the day is devoted to painting one another red or blue, or both, as fancy dictates, their favourite colour being blue. There are women who profess the art of body painting, and make a living by the practice of it, and who display a good deal of taste and ingenuity in the execution of their art. Their paints are made of

indigo and a dye-wood, both of which are indigenous, and are laid on with a piece of hard, flat, but sharp-pointed wood. Figures of plants or animals they rarely attempt to paint, but make numerous elegant scrawls, beginning with the finest hair strokes, and gradually thickening them till half an inch broad and terminating as they began. With legs, arms, face and body thus beautified, and begirt with fine cloths, shawls, or a table-cover, and ornamented with abundance of beads, the head woman of each chief, attended by the less favoured wives, promenade the town after a large looking-glass, carried by two attendants, strutting, chirping, and kissing her hand to her reflection, paying court as it were to herself, and displaying the most inordinate self-love, while dancing and making the most amorous gesticulations. During this ludicrous exhibition the women that follow her sing or rather chant songs in praise of her beauty and goodness.

The dancing is too indecent to be described here, but I may just say that it is descriptive of a love scene, commencing with the first timid advances of a lover, and ends in uncontrollable ecstasy. When men and women dance promiscuously, it is really a shocking spectacle for any one to be-

hold, particularly children and young persons who always congregate on these occasions. This immodest dance and thieving are the only branches of education, as far as I am aware, in which children are instructed. As to business, youths are sent to the markets in the interior and on board ships, to pick up a knowledge of it as they best can. Like servants or slaves of old, as we learn from Virgil, Terence, and others, they are all thieves their education and the state of society generally, sufficiently accounting for their thievish propensity.

The evening is wound up with eating, drinking and smoking, the men being more liberal on these occasions than usual, supply them with the means of procuring rum, tombo, and tobacco. Children of two years of age, and under, are allowed to taste the "damned distillation," and inhale the fumes of the soothing, but to them poisonous herb.

It perhaps may not be very flattering to the fair sex to be informed that the *bustle* is not of European or of modern invention; the females of the Gold and Ivory Coasts having worn a square pad, not quite so big as a pulpit cushion certainly, but of very preposterous dimensions, underneath very scanty clothing, from time immemorial

## CHAPTER XVI.

### AMUSEMENTS

Drinking tombo—Cracking fingers—Gambling—Playing Draughts—Gazelle hunting—Mimicry—Making soldiers—Civil war—Suicide—Settling palaver—Convoys.

OF all their amusements and pastime, the drinking of tombo certainly takes the presidency. Tombo, the national beverage, as was previously observed, is obtained from a variety of trees, of the palm species, and is got by tapping them at top, and either tying some vessel, usually a calabash, immediately below the hole bored in the tree to receive the liquor that exudes, or by letting it run down a string into the vessel placed at the foot of the tree. In this way, gallons are produced, from a single tree, in one night. If the tree be too much drained, it either causes it to be unproductive or destroys its life altogether.

When first drawn from the tree, tombo is full of carbonic acid gass, which causes it to sparkle and effervesce like brisk champagne. After fermentation it acquires a degree of hardness, and is intoxicating. It is astonishing what quantities of this liquor they can drink. I have seen a chief at one evening's sitting, drink as much as would fill a bath big enough to drown him. One pint tumbler follows another in such quick succession, that his stomach is blown out to such an extent, as to make one almost dread its bursting, if not aware that the liquor possesses diuretic qualities, and that the heat of the climate acting on the pores of the skin of a body surcharged with fluid, opens another channel for its discharge. Many gallons have I seen go down an insatiable throat in a few hours. And no small degree of ingenuity is displayed in coaxing the palate to relish so extraordinary a quantity, by using such things as give it a relish, as Europeans do pickled olives, to give a zest to wine.

As soon as the natural appetite is satisfied, recourse is had to slices of the acid lime fruit. When that loses its power of whetting the appetite, a dark pink hard vegetable substance, like a large rose-bud, called dappo, is had recourse to, and when that fails ossesossa. Osesossa is

a yellow fruit, the size of a small cherry, with a large stone, and but very little pulp. The fruit itself is almost tasteless, but it causes everything you eat or drink, after letting some dissolve in the mouth, to taste "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb," and its being used is sure to be followed by intoxication.

At every house, a white trader is presented with tombo. As soon as you have shaken hands, or I should rather say, cracked fingers, a slave is ordered to fill a glass for you, and first presenting it to his master who drinking a little, pronouncing the words, "boo, boo," hands it to you.

Should you meet with a chief twenty times a day, you crack fingers with him every time. Cracking fingers is performed by laying hold of each others fore-finger of the right hand, with the assistance of the thumb, and in loosing, cracking the fingers and thumbs. It is offensive to offer the left hand. The left hand they say is used in dedicating to *Cloacina*, and unworthy to embrace that of a friend. •

The jealousy of the great chiefs, of each other's wealth and importance, often leads to deadly feuds, during which, if one party be not totally exterminated they seldom die with the chiefs themselves, but are handed down as heir-looms



in their families. They therefore treat each other with the greatest politeness, and carefully avoid any thing that might engender strife. The vice of gambling consequently, as a source of amusement and as a means of acquiring wealth, is principally confined to the inferior chiefs and superior slaves, among whom it holds a conspicuous place.

Confident of success, the gambler repairs to his neighbour's house with a few manillas, and the cards being introduced play commences for one manilla a game. The manillas of the least fortunate or least skilful player, or what is of far more consequence, least expert in changing or purloining a card or in packing them, soon pass into the possession of his more fortunate antagonist, and as no credit is given he hies home for a further supply. When these are lost, and if bad luck still attends him 'till his coin is exhausted, he stakes his beads, armlets, and anklets, next follow his knife, red nightcap, and loin-cloth. At last naked and penniless, or rather manillaless, if a free man, he stakes himself against all he has lost, and if still unfortunate becomes the property of his more fortunate opponent, for a period previously specified. Can infatuation lead a man further? It can. Sometimes his wives are included in the stake!

Draughts, a game at which they display considerable tact, is played as a friendly game. Indian Queen of Bonny—not a woman, but a man sent by the late king to a neighbouring state to treat for a wife, hence his name—spends a great part of his time in this amusement, and has acquired such a degree of expertness as to be placed at the head of his countrymen and on an equality with the most expert of his white visitors.

Once a year every great house with its chief at its head repairs to the bush to contend for the honour of taking the greatest number of the gazelle. Each company spreading itself over a considerable district of country in a ring, gradually draws its circumference towards a central point driving the small, beautiful, timid creatures forward till they are cooped up into a small compass within the strong ring fence of men and boys. Some of them bound over the heads of the ruthless sportsmen and escape, the rest are clubbed or carried home alive in triumph to be slaughtered and eaten.

The evening is spent in carousing and eating the fruit of the sport of the day. After a successful battue when more deer have been captured than suffice to satisfy their appetites, they are laid about in their rooms with their four legs tied

together for a day or two moaning and weeping piteously

During these hunting excursions they sometimes catch a tartar in the shape of a ferocious animal. If in an encounter of this kind, the guns with which a few of them are armed can be brought to bear upon the animal without endangering the lives of their companions, it is despatched, if not, they are glad to make an opening for its escape.

There is a good deal of fun in the composition of the African character. Oddity of person, carriage or dress is eagerly seized upon and ridiculed or mimicked with such truth and humour as to often render the object caricatured, whether black or white, any thing but comfortable under the lash of their irresistibly comic and ridiculous representations and exaggerations. It is not often that men of rank unbend from their dignity so far as to give loose to their fancy in bandinage on each other, for reasons already explained, and a white trader, captain or surgeon is generally considered too sacred a personage to be made the subject of ridicule; not perhaps that they care much about him, but from prudential motives avoid giving offence to a man who is, or may at some time, be of service to them in the way of trade.

I recollect in Bonny a comical, squat, hairy, monkey-faced old fellow with a low forehead, long arms, and the agility of a cat, an inimitable mimic. The old fellow could act the monkey to admiration. I have seen more than one white man deceived by his antics when at a short distance from him, whilst amusing a body of spectators in the open air. During my first sojourn in Africa I was one day the subject of deception by this fellow and the unwilling means of affording fun for a gaping multitude of natives

In passing through the market-place my ears were assailed with peals of laughter proceeding from a concourse of people on a piece of irregular ground suitable for the exhibition. On suddenly turning the corner of a house I caught sight of what I supposed to be a very large monkey playing antics, "What an immense monkey" I involuntarily exclaimed "and I declare if they have not tied him on an a——cloth." The moment he saw me he set up a loud chattering, made a few bounds towards me, put his arms about my legs as if to hug me, bounded off a few paces and back again as if he was inviting a companion to a game at gambols; scratched himself, chattered, stretched his lips to the greatest extent and pursed them up, grunted, pretended to be

hunting for pediculi on his hairy limbs, catching, cracking them with his teeth and swallowing them. Observing my confusion, the multitude laughed louder than ever at the idea of the monkey taking me for one of his kind—not very complimentary by the way. I soon began to suspect the trick and at once entered into the fun and my doubts were changed to certainty when he said in tolerable English, without throwing off the character he had assumed, “that time I come for ship to-morrow, *dotto*, (doctor) you must give me one glass of grog” “I will” I said “and an old shirt into the bargain”

Fancying perhaps that he had displayed as much of the monkey antics as was agreeable to the spectators, he changed the scene and personated a white man composing and writing. The peculiar manner of several individuals is assumed. He sticks a bit of stick, to represent a pen, behind his ear or holds it in his mouth; rubs his forehead, folds his arms, or walks about with his hands to his sides as if thrust to the very bottom of his breeches pockets—though like the Highland-man you cannot take off his breeks—turns up his eyes as if recalling something to memory or mutters to himself, till having caught the idea or expression he is in search

of he seizes his pen and writes with the rapidity of lightning.

In a country where a knowledge of letters—where the arts and sciences are unknown, and agriculture is in its infancy, it is not suprising to find that the amusements should be such as consist in gratifying the animal appetites and very trifling pastime. Men of the highest rank and greatest intellectuality fritter away their time, not employed in business or in gross animal indulgences, in frivolities.

I shall never forget finding the king one day when I called upon him engaged in the art and mystery of making soldiers. A number of lads eight or ten years of age were kneeling before his majesty seated in his usual place, on his ordinary seat, an empty gun chest, with an instrument in his hand something like a broomstick with which he was giving them tremendous thumps on their bare heads. "Hallo king" said I "what thing you do now?" "Don't you see?" "Yes" I said "I see you trying to break that pole or stake, or whatever you call it, over the heads of these boys who laugh and look merry enough. What does it mean?" "I be making soldiers." "Soldiers are you? Well! put them to the drill a little bit and I will review them." "I no savvy them drill

and them review, what do they mean ?” “ Why, let me see their qualifications, how they stand fire—what sort of soldiers they be.” He began a brisk patter on their heads with his stick, and continued it along his line of recruits and back again a few times till I called him off and expressed myself well satisfied with his formidable and well disciplined troop. “ But how do you know King which are good soldiers and ready for service ?” “ Why look you,” said he, “ that fellow” letting fall a blow on the top of his head, “ that fellow is not a very good one, but he will do for a common soldier, you see that time I hit him he winks ; but this” striking another a blow strong enough to fracture the skull of a white man, but which seemed to make no more impression on him than it would on a smith’s anvil, “ this is a capital fellow and fit to make a general, I think I must call him Bounaparte or Wellington.”

Notwithstanding their fine military names, they are too great cowards to stand up and fight a regular battle. Their mode of warfare is the guerrilla or bush fighting.

The late King Pepple of Bonny on his death bed appointed his favourite slave Anna Pepple to take charge of his houses, women, and goods,

for the benefit of his son, the present king, and to manage the affairs of the state till he should arrive at age to take the office upon himself; but the old slave was so intoxicated with his power, that instead of giving up his regency at the proper time, he attempted to plant himself firmly on the throne of his late master, and keep the lawful heir in a state of vassalage. However a captain of an English man-of-war was induced to interfere at the instance of the European agents, whose trade was in danger of suffering from the broils, and place Pepple in his proper position of king. Old King Pepple had supplanted his master, King Holiday in the same way, after the death of Holiday's father, who had previously supplanted a son of King George, Holiday's master.

Things now went on pretty smoothly, the king and the old regent, who still retained power, sharing the honours and profits of the monarchy between them for a while; but as old Anna was more than a match in intelligence and intrigue for the young king, he contrived to appropriate the lion's share to himself, which led to a war between the two houses and finally terminated in the king gaining a complete victory.



All the African houses stand a short distance from each other like villas in the suburbs of an English city. Anna's and the king's were within a couple of hundred yards of each other, the house of another great chief, Erinashaboo, (Manilla Pepple,) who was also a slave of the old king, only intervening. A kind of bush fighting was kept up some days with trade guns charged with pieces of copper manillas cut into slugs, and a few sword cuts were exchanged. I went on shore with two Englishmen to try to effect a compromise between the belligerents and we partly succeeded and had an opportunity of seeing their mode of conducting a civil war.

Men and women were engaged in cutting up manillas, rounding the pieces for shot and in loading fire-arms, while men and strong lads stole out and fired at any living thing belonging to the enemy. Neither women nor children were spared. The old chief with his thief mate sat composedly in the middle of a large court in the centre of his house giving orders. A fire blazed before him, and close by his side stood a barrel of gunpowder with the head out. We remonstrated with him on the danger of allowing gunpowder to be placed so near the fire. He observed "it be ready 'pose

I want to use it. Does Obullo (King Pepple) think to take me alive? No, he cannot. 'Pose he come close for my house I put fire for that gunpowder and then he cannot take "Itchie"—his mate—"and me." "Itchie" is the name of the eldest son of an Eboe gentleman and is distinguished by being denuded of all the skin of the forehead. On expressing surprise at his talking of committing suicide along with his mate, he said, "nange, nange; an abbreviation of nangaboo, (friend, friend) you no savvy black man's fashion yet, or you would not talk so." We asked for an explanation but he would give none. No doubt he alluded to their being tortured to death by slow means in case of falling into the hands of their enemies. The war terminated that day and Anna was shorn of his power and emoluments. He took the thing to heart and soon killed himself with drinking.

While talking to the king, a sister of his came into the room in great agitation having received a copper bullet in the fleshy part of the leg. I was asked to extract the poisonous ball or slug, and was about to send to the ship for my field-case, but they could not brook the delay and my services were superseded by one of the king's slaves taking the office of surgeon upon himself

In no very gentle manner he enlarged the opening the ball had made and poked it out with the point of the spear-pointed knife worn at his side. The loss of this patient was no cause of regret.

- Suicide is by no means uncommon in Africa. When life has become burthensome to a chief, he sends his women and children out of the way, coolly takes out the head of a barrel of gunpowder, sits across it, and dropping a blazing faggot into the powder blows himself to atoms. Slaves hang themselves; a barrel of gunpowder is beyond the reach of a poor slave.

A few days after the firing between the king and Anna Pepple had ceased, both houses met to enter into a final compromise. The king and Anna were seated in the open air between their houses, at the distance of about forty yards from each other; a very sacred Ju-ju made of bones and wood and covered with blood and feathers being placed midway between them as a safeguard, that neither party might attempt to pass the sanctuary to make an attack on the other. So very sacred is this Ju-ju, that a dog attracted by the blood happening to touch it with his nose was seized by the hind legs by a priest who dashed its brains out against a tree. Each party was attended by all his women, and children, and slaves, who maintained a profound silence.

The priests and some lazy fellows who call themselves *Parliament Gentlemen*, from their taking part in debates relating to the affairs of the country, act as expounders of their oral laws, and as referees. In this kind of trial or compromise several days are often occupied in adjusting differences and settling on the fines to be paid by both parties to the priests and M P's, and it is attended with a great deal of ceremony. The priests are the medium of communication and receive speeches and messages delivered in a low tone, leaning on a long staff, and repeat them in the same manner. At the meeting I am speaking of between the king and Anna, a large guana crawled out of a hole near to where Anna was seated and remained by him till the first day's business was concluded. This circumstance was looked upon as a happy omen for him and his party and put them quite into good spirits, and he took care that the king should be reminded that he was under the special care of the gods by frequently appealing to the circumstance of the reptile having joined his party.

Almost as much time was occupied in settling about the fees, as in adjusting the difference. Four thousand *igbiges* or manillas were at first demanded but eventually it was agreed that two thousand should be paid between them.

When they proceed to the interior to fight or pillage a foreign enemy, and to convoy trade canoes to and from the markets, their canoes are armed with two, four, and six-pound guns lashed to the bows and sterns, and fixed on swivels amid-ships. They have some very large pieces of cannon laid about the doors of the great chiefs, but I never heard of them being used in a hostile manner but once, when they directed them against the shipping and drove the ships from their moorings and pretty well riddled the sides of one, treatment richly deserved for putting an offensive weapon to be turned against one, into the hands of a barbarous people.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### DOCTORS.

**Native Doctors—Rain stoppers—Surger. Medical treatment—Surgical operations—Cutting a piece off the moon—Moon's first woman—Destroying children—White man under the treatment of a Ju-ju doctor.**

THE African doctor in the exercise of his craft, gulls the people almost as much as the priest does in exercising his.

These impostors profess to be endowed with miraculous powers, and the faculty of curing diseases by charms and enchantments, and like the rain-makers of South Africa fleece the people by imposing on their credulity, to an astonishing degree, when we consider the cunning and talent the chiefs display in trade and in the ordinary affairs of life.

Rude as is their surgery, common sense is exercised in the practice of it to which their medical treatment can lay no claim. A European

must have been in their country some time and admitted to a considerable degree of intimacy before he is allowed to be an eye-witness of the tom-foolery of a patient under the treatment of his doctor.

The learned son of Esculapius is painted, has his head decked with a cap and bells, has bells fastened to his arms and legs; and is dressed in all his finery. Thus bedizened, he dances and 'cuts all sorts of capers before his patient. He has sagacity enough not to administer much medicine, but pretends to take the physic himself by which his patient is to be benefited.

The patient having pointed out the seat of the disease, say of dysentery, the doctor takes a piece of root of some kind out of the little box that contains his medicaments and chews it, at the same time rubbing his hand over the region of his own stomach. When he has got the root reduced to small pieces, he whirls round and round on one leg puffing it out of his mouth as he goes round. Before commencing his antics he is supplied with an egg and a fowl, comprising part of his fee, with which he touches the affected part before taking his departure.

During a very stormy night King Pepple once sent a head slave, with a well-known ring from

his master as a badge of his office, to request that I would visit his majesty, who was ill. When I arrived at his house he was sick and vomiting, and evidently much alarmed at the idea of having had poison administered with his evening's meal or that he was suffering from the equally deadly "poison for eye" (in his estimation) of the witch. After getting him to drink plentifully of warm water to enable him the more easily to disgorge the contents of an over-burthened stomach, I recommended a composing draught, which he refused to take for some time, unless I would take one also. I declined the polite invitation and had some difficulty to make him understand that medicine that might cure a sick person, would make a healthy man sick.

A native doctor had the impudence to tell a chief when I was present, during the rainy season, that he could prevent it raining for three whole days if he thought proper. I denied his power to do so, and the chief and I made a wager of a puncheon of palm oil about it. The chief lost his wager, but I never exacted payment. The doctor afterwards admitted that he had not the power to prevent it raining contrary to the wishes of a *white* man.

Another time on ridiculing a doctor on his



pretended knowledge of the healing art and his miraculous powers, a chief said the doctor could strike me dead in a minute without touching me. I dared him to it under stipulation that no violence should be used and that nothing should be put into my tombo. After conferring with him, the chief told me that he made some sort of excuse on the score of a white man being Ju-ju. I never knew a black man fast for an 'excuse.'

They do however adopt some medicinal measures. When labouring under fevers, diseases to which they are very subject, patients are made to sit near large fires till they are almost roasted, and to rub their bodies all over with palm oil and use it internally. Palm oil is used without a doctor's instructions and is looked upon as a panacea. Jalap is sometimes administered, and perhaps other roots that possess medicinal properties.

They never attempt to perform the large operations of surgery, and a leg is not allowed to be amputated by a European surgeon under any circumstances. A slave having received a severe injury of the foot was sent to me, and I found it necessary in order to save the man's life, for it to be removed, but was not allowed to perform the operation without the king first being consulted. His majesty sent me word that I was on no

account to cut it off, as "Ju-ju no would," (the priests would not allow it) The limb became gangrenous and the poor fellow died shortly afterwards.

But an arm may be amputated. A slave, whilst bathing in shoal water, was attacked by a shark. The voracious creature seized him above the elbow, stripped the limb to the bone, and carried away the hand. I took off the arm above the elbow-joint, and had an opportunity of witnessing on this, and several other occasions, the passive courage for which savages are so celebrated. During the operation he neither spoke nor winced, but held out his arm with the greatest fortitude. After the operation, knowing that a good deal of attendance would be required before a cure could be completed, he almost overwhelmed me with fulsome compliments. "Burraboo," (doctor,) said he, "you be all same my father, my mudda, my brother, my sissen, (sister)" With an extraordinary gulph I swallowed this without remark, for reminding me of Euripides, a refined heathen, who made use of much the same kind of language upwards of two thousand years ago; but when he said "you be all same my God Almighty," I replied, "nay, my friend, not quite God Almighty," he answered, "yes you be, all but

so," putting the forefinger of the remaining hand across the nail of his thumb, "but so and you be same God Almighty. God Almighty give me chop, (food), and you make me stand (live) to eat it."

Since they attempt to palm their "cunningly devised fables" on white men, whom they admit to be intellectually superior to themselves, one need not wonder at their own countrymen being the subjects of deception.

A man who had just returned from the oil market in the interior, and to whom I had been paying a quantity of goods, hung about the cabin after the others were gone, as if he wanted something, but did not like to ask for it. He frequently approached me, and then retired abashed or looked comical, reminding me of Matthews the elder, in a comic scene personating the Irishman on his passage to America with him, when puzzled to know whether the things crawling about the deck were real turtle or mock turtle. After allowing him to back and fill, as sailors say, for some time, wondering what he wanted, I accosted him. "What do you want my friend, you have got your money, (goods), and your dash, (present), and chop, (food), and a glass of eroo, (rum), what more can I do for you?"

“I want to ask you one question Alaboo, (captain), no more I fear to speak you that palaver.”

“Don’t fear my friend, tell me what it is you want to know, and I will answer you if I can.”

“I fear you must laugh at me, and yet I want to know, for I no savvy myself, if what one *big* (learned or celebrated) doctor in Eboe tell me be true ”

“What did he tell you?”

“He said he had walked (travelled) a very long way in that direction,” pointing to the east, “till he came to where the moon touches the earth, and that he cut a piece off it which he showed me, and I want to know if it be true or if it be fool palaver.”

I asked him what made the Eboe doctor tell him such a tale.

He had been sick of a fever, and sent for this doctor, who, to impress his patient with the idea of his being a great traveller and having performed wonderful exploits, and perhaps also, by way of poking fun out of him, as Jonathan would say, invented this story.

I informed him that the earth and the moon are both globes, and placing him at one end of the cabin, I stood at the other, and held a coconut in one hand and with the other “passed

another round it, showing him that the moon at rising and setting only appears to touch the earth, and that they are at a great distance from each other, many times as far as between his country and England. The man was quite delighted with having acquired so extensive a knowledge of astronomy,—said he would have some fun with the doctor the next time he went to Eboe,—paid me several hyperbolical compliments on my vast learning, and promised to bring me a parrot next trip, which however he forgot

On returning in my boat from a village up the river, of the name of Yam.Town, on a beautiful moon-light night, some stars within a few angular degrees of the moon were shining very brightly. I thought I would test my coxswain as to his knowledge of astronomy, so asked, pointing to the brightest star in the heavens, “what thing that be?” (what is that.) He looked very doubtfully in my face, and said, “that be moon’s first woman.” “Very good, and what thing that be?” pointing to the next in magnitude. “Oh that be moon’s second woman,” and so on to some others. My coxswain being an intelligent person, I interrogated him further on the subject, hoping to find under the figure of the moon being a person

and the stars *his* wives, some more reasonable notions, but was disappointed. He seemed to understand it to be so literally.

But to return. While sitting with Anna People it transpired incidentally that some of them have not much faith in the "big doctors," and that ill-conditioned children are destroyed. I was admiring his only daughter, a fine little thing about three years of age, when he informed me that he had had some trouble in rearing her during early infancy and that his people wanted him to drown her. "My mate Itchie," said he, say 'throw him for water' I say never mind, try him a little bit' My steward Keprema, say 'throw him for water,' I say, never mind try him a little bit.' My women say, 'throw him for water,' I say, never mind try him a little bit. Every body say, 'throw him for water,' 'but I no will, I say, try him a little bit.'" I remarked, "did not you ask them big doctor to make him come up?" (make her healthy). He shook his head and smiled, as much as to say, what good.

Sometimes the priest acts as doctor. Being very much exhausted one afternoon after a busy day, but partly to avoid being teased by my friend Ju-ju Tigré, who wanted goods on credit that I did not wish to let him have, I laid down on the

sofa, hoping to avoid his importunities without offending him by a flat denial. The ruse, however, did not answer till I began to complain as if I was ill. He professed to be greatly concerned, and very politely offered to restore me to health. To this I willingly consented. After doffing his tiger's-skin hat set round with tiger's teeth, he proceeded to charm away the complaint by very simple, but very effectual treatment, for I was well and engaged in business when he called early next morning. It consisted in nothing more than repeating *inga, mi, tara, inne, sono, sunu, sonoma, innene*, that is, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, several times over, cracking with his fingers and thumb along the arms, legs, and body, and round the head, every time he repeated a number, and stroking down each member when he had repeated to number eight, saying *sagge, wanga, sua*, which may be translated, disease—dance, be off, get away.

They are very polite in not speaking when you are talking, reading, or writing. When I have wished to get rid of a customer like Ju ju Tigré, I have often read or written till his patience was quite exhausted, and he has gone away

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A LAZY DAY

Leisure—Cleansing mouth—Washing and Dressing—Pastime—Conjuring—Bullock hunting—Employment of women

THE chief has no business to attend to, nor is he going to engage in boisterous Ju-ju palaver. He will spend the day lazily, and so indulges himself with an extra hour of repose on his mat before the dead embers of a fire that went out some hours before *cockerapeak*. Having sent his companion for the night out of his sleeping-room by a door leading into the women's apartment of his establishment, by another he enters the court, close to the door of which he sits, and an attendant hands him some pieces of soft wood, which he chews for an hour or so to cleanse his mouth and throat from the fumes of the drink and to-



bacco in which he had indulged the night before. I have often been amused to see King Pepple on first 'turning out' stretch his arms and legs, pull each finger till it cracks, and twist his head half round, first on one side then the other, as if trying to bring it with his face looking behind him

A tooth-brush resembling a small, dark-brown walking cane, of nature's workmanship, cut even at one end, and chewed to make the fibres of the wood separate, so as to resemble a common tooth-brush very thickset with bristles, is handed to him with which he cleans his teeth for another hour

In company with some of his favourite women he now steps into the washing-room, and in their hands, sitting upon an empty box or piece of wood, he undergoes a good washing from head to foot; one woman emptying sundry large calabashes of water upon his head, while the others rub him down with cloths. He gives audience to favourites or persons on urgent business during his ablutions and whilst dressing.

After being washed and scrubbed to his satisfaction, his favourite woman attends him into an adjoining little room, where his clothing and

ornaments are kept, or to his place in the court to dress.

No modern *exquisite* is more fastidious about his dress than is the African chief. A trunk of which he carries the key fastened with a piece of twine round his neck, is opened and a number of loin-cloths displayed. He will perhaps turn over a hundred, and tie on several, before he meets with one that suits his fancy to wear during the day. When he has selected one that pleases him, he perhaps kisses it in token of his admiration. I have often noticed them kiss articles much prized, as cloths of former years, or things appreciated by their ancestors. A looking-glass is often appealed to, and he views himself in every position before his cloth is finally adjusted. A silk pocket handkerchief is next folded corner-wise, and tied above the cloth passed through a loop in the scabbard of the knife that decks his right side. A woman now rubs his body with a little palm oil, to give the skin a glossy appearance. A long string of coral or glass beads is put round his neck, chosen from a great quantity kept in another trunk and an armlet or bracelet and an anklet put on. The armlet having his name and character engraved upon it in English, stating that he is an honest

man,(!) and a good trader, has been presented by an English trader or merchant. His hair or wool is titivated with a hard wooden comb with three or four teeth, and a scarlet nightcap placed upon his head.

Having no pocket in which to carry his cotton handkerchief, it is neatly folded and placed round his neck with the ends hanging down in front. His toilet being completed, the tooth-brush is resumed which he plies till breakfast be ready. Having had breakfast and drunk tombo till he is half drunk, he retires to enjoy a siesta for an hour, or an hour and a half. After his siesta, he receives company and pays visits to his dependents or the neighbouring chiefs. When he goes out of his grounds, a few slaves with swords walk after him,—not so much for protection as to give people an idea of his importance, and others follow with his large Ju-ju and snuff-box. When taking snuff he never dips his fingers into the box, but takes it from the palm of his hand with his finger and thumb. But if he stops at home, he whiles away the time by playing a kind of tune on a native lyre with one string; turning a barrel organ, or playing his musical box; the women and children all the while thronging about the doors to peep and listen to the music.

Perchance some conjuring tricks are exhibited. I have been amused more than once with seeing a man balancing a hen's egg upon a piece of thread. Before attempting the feat, however, if a white man be present, he tries to get a wager made with him. Standing with his feet apart, he ties the ends of a piece of thread round his legs just below the knees, places an egg upon it, with the thick part of a leaf like a stick of kitchen rhubarb upon the egg, and swings them to and fro with the motion he gives his body.

In this way he passes his time till about four or five o'clock, when he has dinner. After dinner he is entertained with more music, chats with his women, amuses himself with his children, drinks tombo with his mates, and goes to bed drunk at midnight.

The women, children, and slaves, perform their ablutions differently and in a more humble manner. At daybreak they repair to the sea, the river, or the nearest creek, and wading up to the middle, take off their clothes, and use them as we use sponges in washing, tie them on again while standing in the water, and let them dry on their bodies.

The kings have houses, as have also the chiefs, and women to take care of them, in several villa-

gos on the banks of the rivers, to which they repair occasionally, and remain for a day or two. In Bonny they have houses also, some eight or ten miles from the town, in the interior, where their superfluous goods are kept. Sometimes the king invites white men to accompany him to his country house to hunt bullocks, that have sometime, been received from the white traders and captains, and have become wild. The sport is very exciting, but as there are no horses nor other beasts of burden to ride, it is too fatiguing to be long enjoyed on foot, in so hot a climate, and would very likely be followed by fever, if long continued. There are horses a few days journey in the interior, that are treated in much the same way that we treat dogs. Two or three days journey beyond that, horses are used as beasts of burden.

Women pass their time in making fishing lines, men's hats, and little mats. They sit in the market-place with a few little things to sell, as a jar of rum, a few yams, plantains, and bananas, a short time every forenoon and afternoon. These wives who are the least favourites of their husbands, the great chiefs, and all the wives of the others, are employed a good deal of their time in cutting and carrying wood for fuel, fetching

fresh water for domestic purposes, fishing with seines, and in smoking and drying fish for the use of the family, or for sale. The water is very bad, and not fit for Europeans to use. It is supposed to make them more liable to fever, if not to produce it. Vessels leaving England have a supply of water to last the ship till she arrives home again, but it is customary for vessels leaving the oil rivers to put into Fernando Po to water, and to purchase yams, which are to be had very cheap, and are the finest in the world. Many people prefer them to the best potatoes.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### TRADE.

**Discriminating character—Barter—Comey—Breaking trade—Shake hand—Dashes—Trust—Housing ship—Flattery—Articles of trade—Wholesale trading—Paying goods—Trade, south coast—Recovering debts—A white nigger—Novel mode of procuring oil—Seize young debtor—Duke Ephraim—Adulterating and preparing salt for trade—Tornadoes—Miraculous escape—Treacherous about St Andrews—Trading in Fernando Po—Preparation for returning home—An order**

**MANY** of the kings and chiefs possess great powers of discriminating character. During the first interview with a European, not a word nor the motion of a muscle of the face, nor an expression of the eye, can escape their notice, and if a man have a character at all, they are sure to find it out, and treat him accordingly. Some they bully, some they flatter and coax, while others they reason with; their prominent characteristic

however, in their intercourse with Europeans, is a mild, bland, gentle, confident mannerism you hardly expect to meet with but in refined society, well calculated to mislead those ignorant of their true character.

They are keen, cunning men of business, very grasping, and leave no means untried to overreach you in bargain-making. Europeans generally suppose that the white traders take advantage of their innocence, ignorance, and simplicity. It is true they sometimes have done so, but as a general rule, never was there a greater mistake. If you prevent them cheating and robbing you, you do very well, and ought to be perfectly satisfied, and need not expect more, even should you unfortunately have the disposition to overreach yourself.

It is almost unnecessary to inform the reader that money is not the medium of trade. Business is conducted by barter or an exchange of goods. A new description of goods on being first introduced into the country has no fixed value, and if it takes, you can fix the price, which, however, is soon brought down by themselves if you have an abundant supply, whatever you may ask, or your article be really worth. The price of goods here, as elsewhere, is regula-



ted by the supply; for instance, when there has been much sickness amongst a numerous shipping, I have known fowls to rise from sixpence to two shillings a piece, when they could be 'bought at no great distance, but too far to send purposely for them, at sixpence per dozen I have known tobacco fall from seven to eight hundred per cent in a few weeks, in consequence of vessels suddenly arriving loaded chiefly with that article.

As soon as the ship is safely moored opposite the town, the trader goes on shore to arrange with the king what goods are to be paid as "comey" or custom. The quantity is regulated by the registered tonnage of the ship, you must settle with him the best way you can as to the quality. Generally speaking, he is not bad to deal with in settling for comey, not half so bad as in his private trade transactions. The profits of the latter are his own, & of the former, the country participates.

While you are about settling comey and paying visits, all hands on board ship are engaged in lowering masts and yards, stowing away sails and clearing part of the hold of the vessel of empty casks and shakes, &c., preparatory to storing oil, &c., in their place, and in building a

roof over the deck. The ceremony of breaking trade, as it is called, is then gone through. The things discharged from the hold are sent to the beach to be under the protection of a couple of Kroumen, or natives, who build a house of sticks and mats on the spot where they are landed, in which they reside, and are accountable for the goods committed to their charge.

The firing of a blank shot from a cannon and the hoisting of the ship's colours, are signals to the inhabitants that you have settled with the king, and that you are ready to commence purchasing and taking goods on board. For some days the ship's cabins and decks are crowded with visitors eager either to trade with you, beg a shake-hand, (a little present on first shaking hands), or steal. There is no end of their flattery and compliments. The hypocritically joyous countenance, the repeated finger-cracking, and the far-fetched compliments would induce a person, uninitiated into the mysteries of their character, to suppose them to be the most amiable people, and his very best friends in the world.

They are extremely liberal in their promises of trading with you, an object they know you are anxious to gain in order to secure dispatch. They will tell you that every thing you have ta-

ken is of the very best quality and exactly suited to the then state of the market, the great object of the major part of them being to put you into such a good humour with yourself and with them that you may give them a "shake-hand" You have far less trouble with the chiefs who really do intend to trade with you and who do business to the amount of many thousands of pounds in the course of a year, than you have with the numerous small traders and purely shake-hand customers.

A custom incidentally introduced, if to their advantage, can never be got rid of again Making presents, or *dashes* has become part of the trade from usage, and to know how to make presents judiciously, is a very important branch of the knowledge of it When the trader comes to see your goods he asks for a dash, when he brings you goods he wants one, and when he receives payment another. The head slaves look for dashes. The pilots both in bringing you into and taking you out of the rivers, independent of a fixed payment, receive dashes, indeed whatever the occasion of a black man's coming on board may be, a dash is always solicited, and except in collecting trust sometimes, nothing connected with trade tires your patience so much

as their importunities for presents. Then there is a swarm of Ju-ju men and *Parliament Gentlemen* that worry and tease you almost to death for dashes. One or two of the chiefs of this rapacious crew you are almost obliged to give a trifle to, and the rest you get rid of as you best can. Pleading poverty is perhaps one of the least offensive methods of ridding yourself of their company, as you thus acknowledge their merit, and plead inability to reward it. • •

Few things astonish a white man so much on a first visit to this place, on a trading expedition, as the amount of goods solicited by and intrusted to, this people. With the utmost confidence a fellow nearly naked will ask you for three or<sup>•</sup> four, or even five thousand pounds worth of goods on credit, and individuals are often trusted to that amount. I have trusted more than one man goods, the returns of which were worth between two and three thousand pounds. Not one in ten however that asks for trust is worthy of credit to the amount of so many farthings. Some few of the chiefs are really splendid merchants. Hard in making their bargains, but strict in their payments they approach very near, in their commercial transactions to their brethren of Europe and the civilized parts of Asia and America.

And they go about their business in a business-like manner. "Captain A or B," a chief will say, "I want some trust." If you know that in the commercial sense of the word your customer is a good man, you will perhaps ask him when he means to pay you for any goods he may purchase, and what are his resources, and he is sure to preface any thing he may have to say by asking, if he has not a good head and knows how to turn any goods with which you may entrust him to good account, and if he has not a good name among white men, and if he does not always meet his payments. Having admitted all that he says of himself to be true, he will inform you that he has so many canoes and so many slaves to man them, that he has several clever slaves to take command of the canoes and trade the goods in the interior, and that the only thing he wants is money (goods) to send to market.

Trusting to any great amount, or even at all, depends entirely upon circumstances. If a trader have a good name and a large house, that is, numerous wives and slaves—pretty good criteria of his wealth—he may be trusted. But some of the young aspirants to commercial fame may as safely be trusted as great chiefs. To

acquire wealth. he knows he must cultivate a good name, which makes him attentive to business and prompt in his payments. These men are easier to treat with than the wealthier merchants.

To purchase sticks and mats made of bamboo split into thin pieces like laths, to be used for thatch, and to house the ship snugly over to protect it and the people from the heavy rains that begin in May or June, and continue to fall almost without intermission for several months, and from the scorching ray of the sun, occupies several days.

A description of housing a ship for the purpose of securing her from the damaging effects of the extremely heavy rains and the intensely scorching rays of a vertical sun, may interest the general reader.

After the lofty masts have been lowered a piece of timber forked at one end, about half the height of the main-mast, is placed right aft with the forked end uppermost and there secured. One end of a mast or yard is then put upon the fork and the other lashed to the mizzen-mast. Other masts or yards are then lashed between the mizzen and main-mast, and the main and fore-mast, and another carried

forward so to project over the stem. Small spars are then carried on each side of the vessel about eight feet from the deck fore and aft, likewise. Between the high tier in the centre and the low tier at the sides of the vessel, long sticks are lashed, and all together form a skeleton roof projecting three or four feet over the side of the ship, which is covered by laying mats one over another, like tiles or slates on the roof of a house, and stitching them to the sticks with long broad needles made of pieces of iron hoop.

During the rainy season no business can be proceeded with till this is accomplished, otherwise the palm oil which is started down long canvas tubing through little hatches cut in the deck for the purpose, would get mixed with water.

Every thing being prepared for the reception of goods, trade commences, every one being anxious to obtain goods on credit. If it be the first time you trade a ship, the chiefs and small traders approach the subject cautiously. They will apprise you of their great wealth and importance and the large amount of business they did when you were captain, surgeon, or clerk of such and such a ship, how well they

paid their debts without detaining the ship a single day—the rascals perhaps never paid at all—what very good friends you used to be, perhaps ask how the parrot or monkey is they presented to you on a previous voyage, insinuate that they knew you would bring a ship to trade *that* voyage, you are such a clever fellow and “savvy black man’s fashion” and have told their women and boys so. After a long palaver to this effect, they ask you to trust them, if you hesitate they feel certain of success, and ask for a large amount, four times more than they know you will let them have, supposing that after asking so large an amount you will never refuse them a considerable quantity. The goods being examined, a bargain struck and a *book* signed to the effect that if you are not paid by a certain time they shall make certain forfeits, and the goods being paid to them, they go away in great glee to spend the evening in jollification.

The staple articles of trade are Manchester cottons, guns, gunpowder, tobacco, rum, and cowries, and besides these there are numerous other articles of commerce taken out, of less importance as iron bars, copper and brass rods, beads, knives, matchets, soap, earthenware, crystal, jars, iron pots, horns, pearl buttons, silk handkerchiefs, &c, &c.



In dealing with a few of the most intelligent, you pay them by wholesale in bales of cotton cloth, chests of armour, and cases of beads, knives, &c Those of less intelligence, and when the amount is small, say, from six or eight to two hundred pounds worth, are paid in what is called puncheons of bars; that is, a little of each kind of article amounting in value to a puncheon of oil Goods are called bars from the ancient custom of regulating the value of everything by a standard iron bar. But they calculate the value of all goods by the *igbige* or manilla

A knowledge of the language is of great importance in conducting trade as the value of each article is discussed by the chief, and his head slaves who proceed with the goods to the markets, provided you keep that knowledge to yourself, otherwise they consult with them in private or make use of a language you do not understand As many of the masters as well as slaves are from the interior, several languages are understood on the coast.

In paying for goods received, the trader has an infinity of trouble and all his patience is called into requisition, be he endowed with ever so much of that virtue. Although it is perfectly understood before you begin to hand them,

their goods, what quantity of each article is to be paid, they torment you almost to death with "change dis, change dat," and take care generally to be on the right side, as to value. If you get out of patience they will coolly say "no vex my captain change be change, it no be dash, black dog you know for white monk" (monkey.) Then comes the dash. He first wants a valuable article, as a gun or a piece of high-priced cloth, which if he does not get, nay whether he does or not, he next solicits an article of less value as a knife, then a nightcap, then a mug, afterwards a plate, and lastly a tobacco pipe.

Some articles as rum, tobacco, and cowries are sold wholesale, the tobacco and rum in hogsheads and puncheons, which is by far the pleasantest part of the trade. The smallest quantity of oil received is a puncheon. Some of the canoes are very large and carry nine or ten tons. These go up to Eboe, and the Brass river when no vessel is there.

Tedious as trading is on this part of the coast, it is conducted with dispatch compared to the wearisome method of carrying it on to the southward, for there you are often occupied half a day in purchasing an elephant's tusk or a bag of gum copal, and there is no remedy. The Euro-

pean trader has tried over and over again to induce them to take a fair price, what they will eventually take, at once without haggling for hours, but all to no purpose. After the tooth or bag is weighed, half the quantity of goods you mean to give for it is laid at the foot of the owner and you keep adding to the heap first one thing and then another till he is satisfied, or rather, till he finds he can get no more. One of his greatest pleasures in life is haggling and disputing, not in violent angry altercation but a friendly sort of teasing in attempting to overreach you.

When you have sold all the goods that remained after giving trust, you send up the lofty masts of the ship that were lowered after mooring, as a signal that you have done trading, and are now waiting for the returns for your trust, and this is the time that your real trouble commences. Some of the people that made such splendid promises of trading with you when you first entered the river, have never been near your ship since they were trusted, but have been trading with other ships on ready money terms with your goods. This is exceedingly vexatious; by giving credit, you perhaps lose a good customer, and run the risk of losing your goods into the bargain, or at least of being put to great trouble

and anxiety, and if you do not give credit, the great merchants will not do business with you.

Your best friends now leave off trading with other ships, and send you the oil as it comes down from Eboe, Quaw, &c . . . . .

If any to whom you have given trust be trading with other ships, with your goods, in order to turn the capital over as often as possible, or their canoes have been detained at the various oil markets, the work of dunning ~~commences~~ <sup>commences</sup> in earnest, and to convince them that you are really in earnest, you perhaps visit them three times a day, your cry and if not always alluded to, is perfectly understood. "What come again captain," a trader has said to me the third visit, "that time it<sup>o</sup> be cockern, <sup>peak</sup>, I look your face, that time sun stand for top, (noon), I look your face; and now that time man want to go moona (sleep) I look your face again, what palaver this be?" "Trust, my friend, I want my money. What thing you tell me that time you get my money? You no tell me I cannot stand (wait) one day for your side, (on your account) and don't you see what way my ship masts stand, and, by-and-by my people must cry for chop" If they promise to pay you on a certain day, you may generally depend upon them. If you are

very much tried, you sometimes lose or affect to lose all patience, and call them ugly names, as niggers, bushmen, &c , and, threaten, to "make book," and send it to all the white men to inform them that they are rogues and not to be trusted, and to tell the merchants in England to caution their agents against having anything to do with them. If they have the means of paying, this sort of language will generally have the desired effect, but you, like themselves, must study the characters you have to deal with, and treat them accordingly. If their canoes are at the fairs and they have no means of paying till they return, they will perhaps bluster a little also, and ask you how you suppose they are to pay, when they have nothing. Occasionally, however, they become very saucy. After rating a great man soundly for being so tardy in meeting his payments, he called me a "white nigger," as a set off for my having called him a "black nigger." "What way," said I, "you call me nigger, I be free-man, —I be gentleman in my own country." "Chi," said he, "what way you call yourself gentleman. Who them ship belong for, he be yours?" "No" I replied, "the ship is not my own property." "Well then you be white nigger, suppose you no be nigger, you bring your own ship, and no

'tother man's ship " Upon the whole, gentle treatment and a little coaxing answers the best, or a mixture of the rough and smooth, as I once heard an old trader remark, the best way to treat a black man, is to hold out one hand to shake hands with him, while the other is doubled ready to knock him down.

A trader, who had been a long time detained on account of trust, made application to a man-of-war officer, who happened to come into the river to look after slavers, to assist him to obtain his oil. The creditor was my old friend, King Pepple, and I believe he had not the means of meeting the demand at the time. He pleaded inability, but the man-of-war's-man threatened, and told him he must pay whether he had palm oil or not. "What way must I do that," said the king, "do you think I can p—— forty puncheons of oil." "No," the officer replied, "I do not suppose you can do that." "Do you think I can s—— him." "No, no," said the officer, half ashamed. "Then what way I do?—I no have 'em!"

Occasionally you are obliged to man your boats with white men, and proceed a few miles up the creeks during the night, and wait for canoes coming down with their cargoes, and seize.

those which belong to your debtors, and tow them to the ship. I have seen canoe-men so alarmed, on pulling suddenly upon them, as to jump overboard and make for the bush, supposing that they were surprised by an enemy, but as soon as they found we were Englishmen, they returned. This is dangerous both on account of the frequency of accidents and the risk to health. I have returned on board in a morning, after laying out in a boat all night, so disfigured with being stung with mosquitos, as hardly to be recognisable.

When all other means fail, your last resource is to watch your debtor till he come on the river to visit some ship, if you cannot induce him to come on board, and make him prisoner. Then a palaver commences in earnest. Locked up with him in the trade-room, he first assails you with a volley of abusive epithets, and perhaps threatens to kill you the first time you go on shore. Above all things, you must keep yourself cool, and not exhibit the slightest symptom of fear. Finding that blustering and teasing will not induce you to let him go, he goes on another tack. Coaxing, flattery, and "sweet-mouth," (fair promises) are equally unavailing, he cannot be allowed to leave till the

last farthing is paid. He then tries to excite your sympathy by tears, and debases himself by falling upon his knees before you, to entreat you to let him go, and he will pay you every "flint" yesterday or to-morrow—the terms are synonymous.—His wives, children, and slaves, will laugh at and despise him, he will lose cast with his countrymen and credit with white men. When he finds that nothing he can say will avail, and that he must pay his debts before being released, he will perhaps burst into laughter, and tell you, you are all "same devil," and order the head slave that accompanies him, to go to the beach, and bring you off your due.

A few hours after a palaver of this kind, I have gone ashore, and have been treated in the kindest manner possible, without the disagreeable circumstance having been alluded to

If a man exert himself, and show a determination to get away, it is seldom necessary to have recourse to such unpleasant measures.

The Grand Duke Ephraim, and the principal chiefs of Old Calabar are acquainted with the arts of reading and writing which they apply in their business transactions. The inhabitants of the other rivers trust entirely to their memories which necessity and use have enabled them to cultivate



and strengthen to an extraordinary degree. Although they trust to their own memories they will not trust those of Europeans, neither will they trust to their books, they have more confidence in themselves than they have in you and the artificial assistance you have at command. Receipts for elephant's tusks, oil, &c, are given in writing. Agreements of all kinds and promissory notes, and orders upon the officers of the ship are also given under your hand, on scraps of paper which they fold carefully up and tie in the corners of their handkerchiefs. A native trader doing business with ten or fifteen ships at the same time, whose transactions extend to every article of commerce they have, has an incredible number of these written documents or "books," but I never new a wrong book presented. Their head slaves and wives assist in arranging, taking care of, and remembering them.

Africans are not a whit behind Englishmen and other white people in the abominable practice of adulterating their goods. Sand and copper-filings are mixed with gold dust; boiling lead is poured into the hollow of elephants' tusks to make them weigh heavier; and water, mud, chopped plantain-sucker, and calabash are mixed with palm oil to increase its bulk. Every con-

ceivable mode of deception is resorted to, to cheat you. Some of them are not indifferent coopers, and with the coopers' tools they have stolen from ships, cut off the chimes of the casks with which they are supplied to put oil in, and make new ones, or knock down the cask entirely and take out a stave or two, or nail pieces of wood to the inside of the heads of the casks.

Preparing salt for the markets in the interior is a very important branch of business and is conducted by women. They make little vessels, like round-bottomed tumblers, of clay, and dry them in the sun. Into these vessels is placed salt mixed up with clay and water, which is also dried in the sun and afterwards turned out in a solid mass. In this state it is portable being fit to withstand the effects of rain and a leaky canoe without dissolving. Of course it is used as it is, mixed with clay. \* •

This coast is visited by tornadoes accompanied by heavy rains and the most dreadful thunder, and forked lightning which appears to proceed from every quarter of the heavens at once,—the canopy is in a blaze, and the thunder rolls and cracks fearfully, overcoming the loudest voice, and jarring the bells and glasses throughout the ship. Nothing will induce a native to stop on.

board during one of those battles of the elements. If it come on suddenly every man hurries off to his canoe and pulls on shore. Loaded canoes are deserted and sometimes swamp. Goods are left laid about the decks and cabins in the greatest disorder, every man is off in the greatest hurry as if certain destruction awaited him if he should remain on board. Once on shore they consider themselves comparatively safe. Sometimes a mast is shattered or the people struck with blindness for a while, and occasionally a ship has been blown up. And really when one considers that there is perhaps thirty or forty tons of gunpowder on board and that the people are arrant cowards, there is no wonder at their making so precipitate a flight.

A Krouman had one of the most miraculous escapes from a ship that was blown up by gunpowder, in Old Calabar, perhaps on record. It appears that the captain while on shore had had a quarrel with one of his officers, which he took very much to heart; and on meeting with one of the crew he told him he would go on board, light a cigar, go down into the powder magazine, knock in the head of a barrel of powder and stick his cigar into it and blow up the ship. He went on board and almost immediately afterwards the

ship blew up shattered into ten thousand pieces. It fortunately happened that most of the ship's crew were on shore, those that were on board suffered the same fate as the vessel, except a Krouman belonging to the cabin, who was looking out of one of the stern ports. Immediately after the explosion he found himself in the water a considerable distance from where the ship was moored, unhurt.

The people a little to the east of Cape Palmas are so treacherous and blood thirsty that before allowing them to come on board, guns on swivels and the ship's crew armed with small arms are placed aft ready to defend the ship in case of an attempt to take her. The trader, on the fore part of the deck receives them as they come up the ship's side, and bargains with them, and pays them goods.

In Fernando Po nothing can be more primitive and simple, and less calculated to cause dispute than their mode of selling yams, or any other article that they may have to dispose of. A line is drawn upon the sand between the trading parties. Yams, &c, are laid on their side of the line, and beads or tobacco or whatever it may be, on yours. If the Booby is satisfied with your articles he steps across the line and takes

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them, leaving you to take his yams, &c, if not, he removes them. A similar custom exists on some parts of the banks of the river Niger. The wants of the Booby are so few and those so easily satisfied, that he is very good to treat with. I have bought three fowls for two gun-flints, worth less than one farthing.

While the vessel is being unmoored preparatory to sailing for England, the trader is on shore paying farewell visits to his black friends, and receiving orders for articles to be brought next voyage. After making memoranda of a number of things to bring for a chief "t'other next voyage" he said with some hesitation "now captain there be 'tother very best fine thing I want from England, no more I fear you cannot bring 'em. My father send for them thing long time past, and captain no will bring 'em, and I no savvy what way he no will, he live for your country and I must pay plenty of money for 'em and" —— "what in the name of wonder do you want" said I "am I to bring you Buckingham palace or the Thames tunnel or" —— "offourie, offourie," (no, no) said he "I only want *two white women*." I told him I could not take upon myself to say that I would sell him two white women to order as the ladies of all ranks in my country are free,

but if merchant in England had no objection I would take him two white women on freight if two could be found willing to live with him, but I thought he would be better without, as white ladies are very jealous and do not like their husbands to divide their affections. So the matter ended and I have not seen him since

## CHAPTER XX

### FERNANDO PO

**Pilots—Their Importance—Fernando Po—Ilha Formosa—  
Produce—George's Bay—Aboriginal Inhabitants—Circum-  
cision—Punishment for adultery—Institution**

Having received of your black friends all the orders you think proper to take, paid parting visits of ceremony to a few of the principal chiefs, and taken the pilots on board, you drop down the river, at spring tides, only, if the vessel be of heavy draught of water, and proceed to cross the bars. You have at least two native pilots on board, one of whom stations himself at the forepart of the ship, perhaps upon the bowsprit or gibboom, and the other on the quarterdeck to direct the man at the helm. The captain however does not leave the entire piloting of the ship to these people, and if for no other purpose but

to explain to the helmsman the direction in which to steer, his presence would be necessary, for the "port, starboard, larboard,—larboard, starboard, port" of black's commanding would puzzle him no little did not the captain give more intelligible directions, the pilots however can make themselves understood by saying "tend so" pointing in the direction in which they wish the ship's head to be kept. They keep up a constant lawling all the time they are engaged, and order and counter-order, without any reason, save to give an idea of their importance.

A day or two suffices to reach Loumbo Po, one of the most beautiful islands in the world, and very highly situated considering its proximity to the deadly continent. It is situated in the Bight of Biafra about twenty miles from the main land, and is about thirty miles long and sixteen broad. In clear weather it can be seen at the distance of one hundred miles. In coming from the northwest it appears to make in three hummocks, but this is not the fact, for one of them is the high land of Camaroons which when seen in the distance with the two great mountains of the island, they appear to be equidistant and altogether to form a group.

The appearance of Fernando Po on approach.



ing it, is exceedingly imposing and majestic, fully justifying the titles first given to it of Hermosa and Ilha Formosa (*The Fair—Beautiful Island*.) The mountains are connected by a high ridge of land, the northernmost part of which is nearly eleven thousand feet above the level of the sea. The shore is formed of rocks and trees. Some of the forest trees which reach down to the water's edge are of enormous size, and it is not uncommon to moor ships to them. The lower part of the island, and for about two-thirds up the mountains, are extensive forests, from thence to near the summit the trees become scantier and of stunted growth. A little way up the mountains are various patches of cultivated land, producing yams and Indian corn. The water is very cold and excellent, and plentiful all over the island, and the numerous streams tumbling down the sides of the mountains are very pretty. The place altogether is a delightful contrast to the monotonous sameness of the low flat coast of the Continent. It produces abundance of goats, fowls, vegetables, and fruits of every kind peculiar to a tropical climate. It is said that a little way up the mountains, nutmegs grow wild, and that higher up, there are bullocks. A variety of the monkey

species, considered by the natives a great delicacy, is numerous. The bays abound with fish, and turtle is sometimes taken. From the great height of the mountains and the fertility of the soil, I have no doubt but tea, coffee, and a variety of spices, and the productions of temperate climates may be produced.

George's Bay and the surrounding country, are exceedingly beautiful. The bay is of a semi-circular form,—several miles deep and wide, with a fine smooth water of thirty fathoms, gradually shoaling to ten. Those who have seen both the Bay of Naples and George's Bay say, that the latter with its imposing scenery, is the most magnificent.

This island, which belongs to Spain, appears to have been quite neglected by that country and the Portugese by whom it was discovered. However, in 1827 the attention of the English government was directed to it on account of its favourable position for suppressing the slave-trade in the inner part of the Gulf of Guinea, and a settlement formed at Clarence Cove at the north end of the island. A fort was manned by guns, landed from one of his Majesty's ships, barracks and an hospital were built; and a governor or commandant appointed. Clarence, called after

his late Majesty, who was then Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, contains a mixed population of natives, Kroumen, and white people. Nothing could be more favourable for the purpose for which the settlement was intended than this island, for it is situated in the very centre of the slave-market,—is well adapted as a depôt for provisions and fuel,—can supply yams, water, and wood in abundance, and is a healthy spot, suitable for the sick and convalescent.

The aboriginal inhabitants are said to amount to about twelve hundred. They are of a different race to the people of the coast, being taller and of lighter complexion, as you may perceive when the oil, clay, and filth with which they disguise themselves, are washed off, and their hair grows straighter and longer. Their countenances would not be half so hideous were it not for the custom of tattooing. Their faces are gashed all over in infancy, leaving rough, ugly, irregular scars. What can be their motive for disfiguring themselves in this manner? Is it under the notion that God may be able to discern them in the undiscovered country? The Kroumen tattoo, to distinguish themselves from other nations in case of falling into the hands of slave-dealers, that as they are freemen, they may not be sold

into slavery. On the coast, it is considered unmanly not to have two or three large gashes on the breast. Those that are born freemen or gentlemen, neither circumcise nor cut any part of their bodies. All the male slaves, and in some nations the female slaves, are circumcised.

These people, like their neighbours, are polygamists, and their wives when found guilty of adulterous connections, are subjected to a very barbarous punishment. For the first offence the left hand is cut off at the wrist; the second offence is punished with the loss of the right hand, and if found guilty again, the adulteress loses her head. This punishment and tattooing are the only cruelties known to be practised by them.

The Booby attempts an imitation of everything you do and say. Speak to any one and he will do the same, imitating your tone and also your words as near as he possibly can, without having the most distant idea of their import, or of giving offence. Pull the bell, and on its ceasing to ring, he will rise from his seat, and ring it also. But this is not peculiar to the Booby. I was once very much amused with a Krouman who had left his country with me to act as pilot till we had cleared some rocks, and who evidently

had not been used to a ship's cabin, attempting to conform to our customs I asked this man to eat with me but so awkwardly did he handle his knife and fork, that I expected every moment he would receive either a stab or cut. To sit on a chair seemed to be irksome He placed himself in every conceivable position, but appeared to be very uncomfortably seated till he had got upon it with his feet, and placed himself in the position in which his countrymen usually sit, that is, with his posteriors on the calves of his legs his elbows on his thighs, and his chin resting upon his hands.

## CHAPTER XXI

### GOVERNMENT

Forms of government—Petty states—Three kings—A wet  
a— cloth—Chiefs, absolute—Big and little father—Par-  
liament gentlemen—Tyranny of kings—Putting mark for  
ship—Attempted extortion—Diminished power.

THE government of the numerous states of Western Africa may be said to be a compound of patriarchy, absolute monarchy, and aristocracy, all these forms of government being exercised according to the different circumstances in which the several nations may be placed, or the power and energy; or vacillation and incompetency of their sovereigns.

Some of the large states, as Ashantee and Yarriba, are ruled over by powerful monarchs, who hold in tribute several smaller ones; while others comprise only a few miserable villages,

with men at their head, to whom it is almost a burlesque on the name of king to give that title, though they are styled so. Of the latter there are several on the Krou Coast, and in the island of Fernando Po. Putting into Northwest, or George's Bay of that island, on an occasion to purchase yams, and to water, three kings came on board the vessel at the same time, all residing in the country round the bay within four or five miles of each other, and I could not but remark their superior carriage and demeanour when contrasted with that of their subjects, which must be accounted for from the high notions they entertain of their exalted station, or from their natural superiority, which had caused them to be raised to that position. One of them was called King George after our monarchs of that name, another Pull-away, from his being a good manager of an oar or a paddle. I should suppose, the name of the other I have forgot. From what I could learn, they scrupulously regard the boundaries of their respective territories and appear to live in perfect amity. They all eagerly receive any thing you may give, and do not scruple to prompt you, should you overlook, or neglect them. A handful of cigars divided amongst them made them chuckle with delight.

The king of a petty place on the Krou Coast, who thought proper to honour me with a visit while at anchor off his country waiting to ship a few of his countrymen to proceed with the vessel to her destination, had not been long on board before he began to shuffle and twist about, and appeared to be very uncomfortable, and on enquiring the cause of his uneasiness, I was informed by his mate or prime minister, in a whisper, that his majesty's a——cloth was wet and that it was customary on occasions of the kind to present him with a piece of cloth (from twelve to twenty yards) to sit on, and a jar of rum to fortify the inner man against any ill effects that might arise from the damp cloth. Such is the propensity, even of the highest class, to beg I excused myself from acceding to the modest proposal as his cloth was quite dry, and soon restored him to equilibrium with the present of an old black stuff hat and a glass of grog.

Each chief exercises sovereign authority over his household. Being both prince, and in some respects priest, he bears a striking resemblance in these and in many other respects regarding customs, manners, and mode of living, to Job, Abraham, and the other patriarchs of old, having however little of the "true light which light-



eth every man that cometh into the world," which *they* possessed in so eminent a degree.

The most ancient form of government which at first would be truly patriarchal, as the family increased and became less known and less cared for, more particularly after the introduction of slavery and of polygamy, would sink into tyranny and despotism, or would be more mild and paternal according to the character of the head of the house. The former has become eminently so in most parts of Africa.

The chief is sole arbiter in all matters relating to his household, and he makes, administers, and executes the law. When a chief dies—his son being a minor—one of his head slaves is appointed by the king, or the king and chiefs, to be chief of the house, *pro tempore*, and is allowed to assume the family name, which he too often retains along with his office, and perpetuates in his family what was only delegated to him in trust. His daughters are not allowed to inherit in most states and are looked upon as inferior beings,—of value however, inasmuch as they give birth to sons.

A chief is held in the highest respect by all the members of his household, who look up to him as the head and father of one great family. The

son of a slave has far greater reverence for his chief than he has for his father, and at once renders implicit obedience to mandates issued by him, that would be altogether neglected or treated with indifference if coming from his own father.

"Whose boy you be?" said I one day to a lad

"Foobra be my father," said he.

"Nonsense man," I replied "you no be Foobras son, I savvy Foobra's children, and I am sure you are not one of them."

"It be true I tell you, Foobra be my father"

"Did Foobra *menbegat* you?"

"Chi, no, my small father *menat me*, Foobra be my big father."

The still more elegant phrase *cacavis* used in the very coarsest manner, is applied to express the same thing, in another place on this coast. The words in italics, of course, were not used, and the reader will perceive the reason of my substituting another language.

In times of peace and plenty, the sovereigns of those barbarous states rule with great tyranny, particularly if their mental endowments are equal to their ambition, regardless of certain traditions and rules which ought to bind them. The "parliament gentlemen," and priests are the transmitters of the oral traditions alluded to. The priests

alone, are the receivers of the cabbala relating to religion, and the doctors of what has reference to their craft. I have heard king's declare that all the men in their dominions—priests, chiefs, and all—were so many *niggers* (slaves), and the people have at times, either from fear or policy, submitted to be treated as little better. The rogues, generally, have too much cunning to attempt to crush too many houses at once, but whilst they are oppressing one, they are flattering and winning over with favours others to be themselves oppressed in their turn.

Kings and Governors in the plenitude of their power and wealth have sometimes ill-treated white men. The Anna Pepple that I mentioned in a former chapter, when regent, placed a commissioned officer of one of his late Majesty's cruisers, along with an English trader, in irons, for some imaginary offence, and sent for a native doctor, or an executioner to emasculate them. However the threat was not put into execution, Anna having determined otherwise on reflection, perhaps having been influenced, in some degree, by his head wife and favourite's slaves to abandon the idea; which was a very fortunate after-thought for himself, as a cruiser afterwards came up to the town and read him such a lesson as he never for

got, and his head would certainly have been forfeited had he had the audacity to carry out his threat

One of the most annoying things to a white trader, is to be compelled to give trust to the king and rulers; and that too, to such an extent as often to embarrass him and cause his detention in the country, causing great loss to the owners and also the sacrifice of the health of himself and the crew. If the wishes of the great man in this matter are not complied with, an exceedingly arbitrary and base practise is resorted to called "putting mark for ship," in other words, issuing a proclamation forbidding every person to trade with you, and doing it in such a way that you are perfectly helpless. Suppose you have been with the king and he has demanded more goods on credit than you could with prudence let him have, you find next day that no one comes near your ship. If uninitiated into the mysteries of blackie's character, you wonder what is the matter, every ship having several canoes alongside, but yours. If you go on shore and ask the first half-dozen people you meet, the reason why no one comes near you, they all testify their utmost astonishment—whatever is the matter—they never heard of such a thing in their lives—

You parted with the king the day before on excellent terms and therefore proceed to his house to lay your complaint before him; which having heard, he coolly tells you that he is very sorry for you, but that he cannot help you; if his people do not think proper to trade with you, it is not his fault; that he, himself, is doing no business, or would be glad to treat with you; that all his canoes and slaves are at the fair, &c; at the same time if an old trader, he knows perfectly well, that you know that he has stopped your trade, and why he has done so. I never was served in this way myself, but I know those who have been so treated. What is to be done? It is true he has broken a commercial treaty entered into between the British Government and himself, ratified by an officer belonging to one of her majesty's men-of-war, but how are you to prove it; there is nothing—at least there was not a short time ago—but either acceding entirely to his wishes, or making the best arrangement with him you can, after which, trade goes on as usual.

A Frenchman whose trade had been stopped in this way, sent a boat out into the offing to look for a man-of-war to intreat that she might be brought to his assistance, which was done, which so exasperated King Pepple that he had se-

rious thoughts of attempting to take her with his war-canoes, but who on being remonstrated with on the madness of such a step, wisely forbore, though no doubt he could have done so by sacrificing some scores, or hundreds of lives and a few war-canoes.

The most ingenious devices have been resorted to, to extort goods from Europeans. An old and successful trader who had two, if not three ships in the Bonny river at the same time, sent one of light draught enough to cross the bar into New Calabar to trade, oil being scarce on account of the inhabitants being at war with a state that lay between them and the oil market. Pepple brought a serious charge against him for so doing, but the trader was too well acquainted with the customs of the country to be foiled by the cunning rogue, and mentioned in his defence the fact of two or three traders having done the same in by-gone years. Find a precedent and all is right. After some palavering the only thing the king could say was, that the ships the trader alluded to had only *two* masts, while his had *three*. A black man is never fast for a plea when he wants to carry out any measure that affects his interest, or in which his preconceived notions are concerned. In this instance however, he did not succeed.

But in troublesome times, when their country is at war with some neighbouring state, or a people between them and the oil markets, or when internal commotions distract their country, or a cruiser demands; on behalf of a trader, redress for some grievance; or in consequence of a scarcity of produce, or when from any other cause trade is in a depressed state, and there is danger of the profits arising therefrom, not being sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life, the burden of government becomes too weighty and onerous for their kingships. Ichabod — Their glory is departed, and they willingly sink into the Doge, or are too glad to be classed with the chiefs, upon whom they endeavour to throw all the responsibility they possibly can. The chiefs are summoned to their councils to “jam head” or lay their heads together, “parliament gentlemen” are called on to state and expound the law, or what is more probable, assist in devising means of evading it, and the priests offer their assistance. The white man too is sometimes pressed into their service, indeed every available talent and influence is engaged in their behalf. In a Ju-ju house, or on a convenient piece of ground in the open air, the most talented of the aristocracy harangue their compeers for an hour toge-

## DIMINISHED POWER

ther, during which period breathless silence is maintained, and the most marked attention given to the orator. He lowers or raises his voice, and uses mild or violent gesticulations as the subject inspires him, and in his peroration, having made allusions to the greatness and antiquity of his country, he sits down amid the "ebimus" (good, good) of the august assembly. The now little great man that probably a few hours before called these very men his "niggers," has not a word to say. Othello's occupation's gone, — the stork has become the log of wood — to become the stork again the first opportunity that presents itself.

THE END

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THOMAS GILL, PRINTER, EASINGWOLD.









